2026 Oregon Rural Health Conference Presentation Slides

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY





Supporting Access to Healthcare Among Rural Farmworker Communities

October 8, 2026

External Relations Division
Office of Community Health and Engagement

Presenters



Fabiola Herrera
Farmworker Outreach and Engagement Advisor
Office of Community Health and Engagement (OCHE)
Oregon Health Authority
Mayra.f.Herrera-hernandez@oha.Oregon.gov



Jorge Martinez
Farmworker Outreach and Engagement Advisor
Office of Community Health and Engagement (OCHE)
Oregon Health Authority
Jorge.e.martinezzapata@oha.oregon.gov

Purpose of today's presentation

- Familiarize audience with the Office of Community Health and Engagement (OCHE) formerly the Community Partner Outreach Program (CPOP).
- Familiarize audience with the Oregon Farmworker Health Program (OFHP) - formerly Protecting Oregon Farmworkers (POF).
- Highlight the farmworker community living and working in rural Oregon and how that affects their health.
- Describe what Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and OCHE are doing to advance farmworker health.
- Identify what the audience can do to help connect farmworkers to healthcare.



ffice of
Community Health
and Engagement



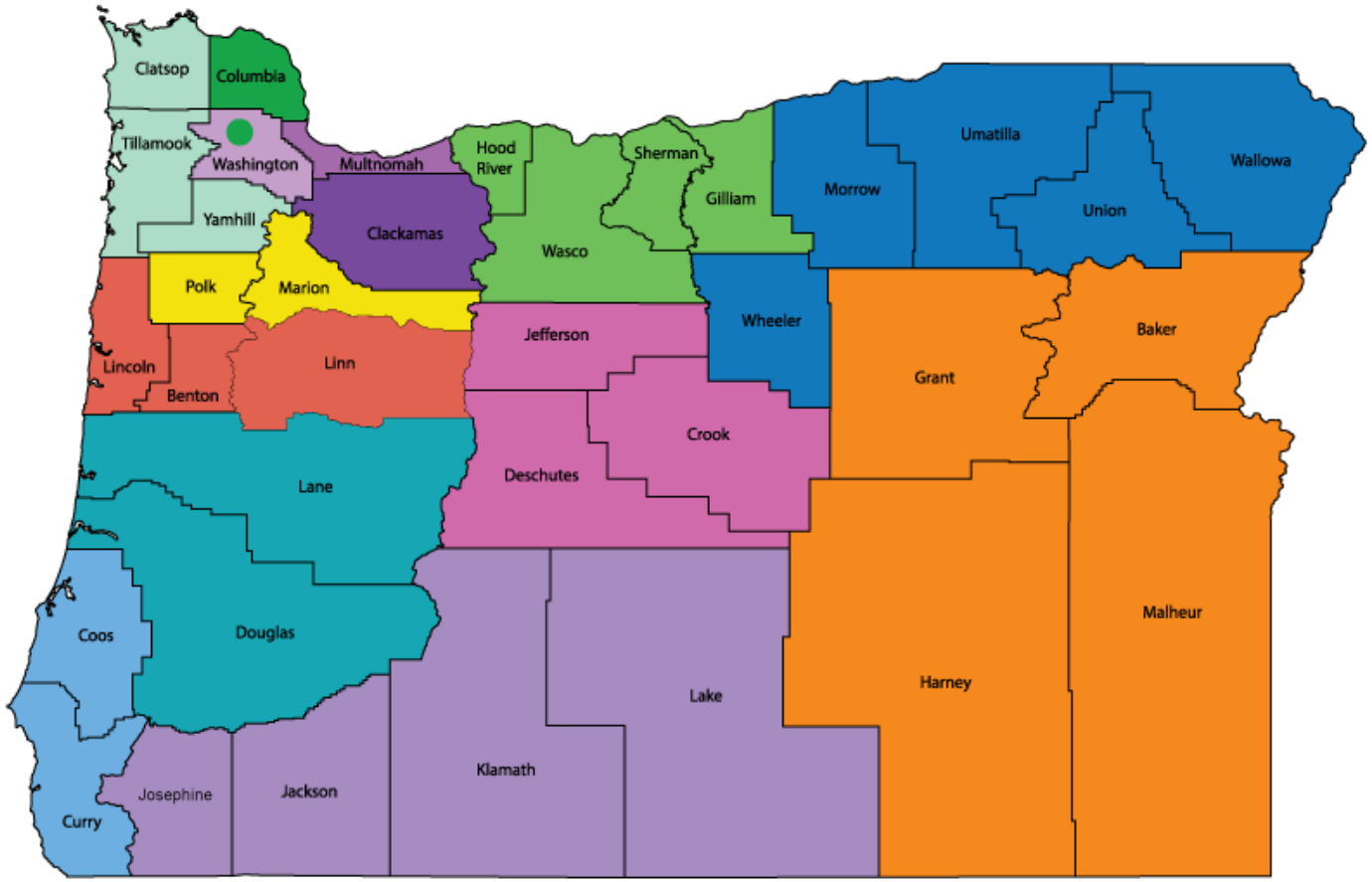
Who is OCHE?

- Together, we strive for a stronger, healthier Oregon.
- Through passion and collaboration, we elevate both the beauty in diversity and unique community needs.
- **Our mission** is to engage communities across Oregon to advance an equitable, responsive health system.

What is the Office of Community Health and Engagement (OCHE)?

- Mostly works with the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), Oregon's Medicaid program.
- Supports a network of over 400 organizations across Oregon.
  - 1,700+ individual OHP-certified assisters.
  - Assisters are also referred to as Community Partners or CPs.
- Has a regional and statewide team that helps our diverse network of partners.
- Administers grants for close to 65 organizations.

The OCHE team



- Regional Outreach Coordinators (ROCs)
- Advisors
- Justice-Involved team
- Special Project Coordinators
- Oregon Farmworker Health Program (OFHP) team
- Communications team
- Business team
- Leadership team

OCHE's strategic role

OCHE is uniquely positioned at OHA to address the health disparities faced by Oregon's farmworker communities.

- **Mission alignment**
  - Focus on Community Health Equity and Engagement
- **Programmatic Structure**
  - Supports healthcare system navigation, outreach, education and partnership building
- **Expertise in Community Partnership**
  - Long history of partnering with local organizations and community partners

Relationships are the heartbeat of OCHE!

Farmworker Community in Oregon

What do you know about rural farmworkers and agricultural communities in Oregon?



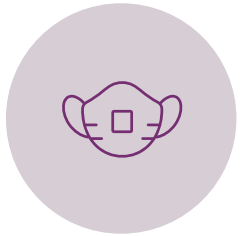
Farmworker community in Oregon



There are an estimated 258,000 farmworkers and farmworker dependents in Oregon; about **6% of the population**



Live and/or work in rural communities



Farmworkers are especially vulnerable to chronic disease, heat-related illnesses, repetitive motion injuries, and respiratory disease.



Primary economic driver of Oregon's **42-billion-dollar agricultural economy**



During the COVID-19 pandemic, Oregon farmworkers faced disproportionately high infection rates due to crowded housing, shared transportation, lack of PPE and testing, language barriers, and inadequate safety protocols

Primary health concerns

Occupational hazards	Ongoing barriers to healthcare	Exposure to environmental hazards
Chronic disease	Mental health risks	Reproductive health

Social Determinants of Health

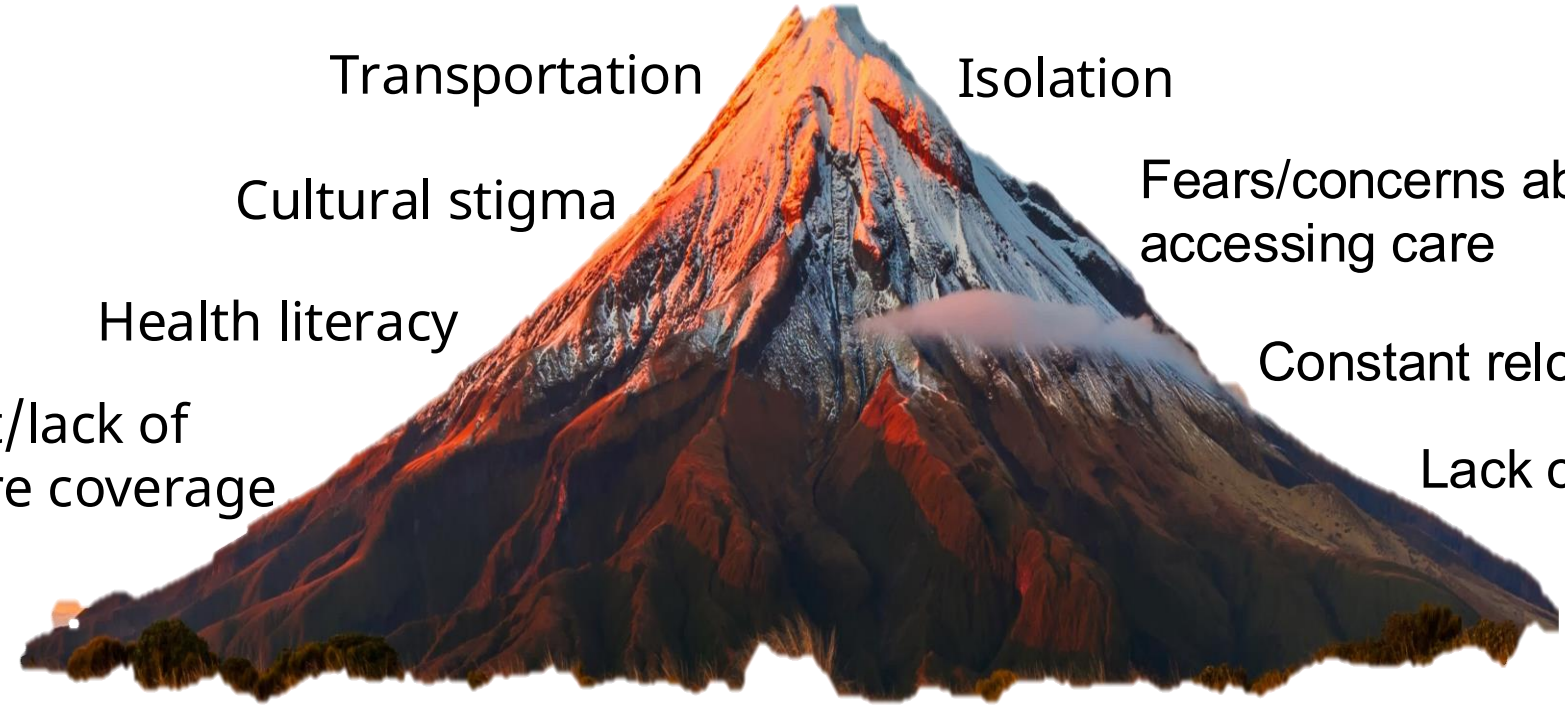
- Affordable housing
- Food insecurity
- Poverty
- Transportation & digital access barriers
- Gender based violence - Sexual and domestic violence
- Low engagement with health programs
- Exclusionary policies



Farmworker Women Health Impacts

- High rates of gender-based violence.
  - An estimated 80% of farmworker women have experienced sexual violence.
- Inadequate access to sanitary facilities.
- Dehydration, extreme temperatures, exposure to pesticides.
- Reproductive health issues.
- Particularly difficult during pregnancy.
- Gender-based discrimination.

The path to access healthcare



What efforts currently exist to support rural farmworker communities?



Oregon Farmworker Health Program (OFHP)

(Formerly Protecting Oregon Farmworkers)

Program origin

A proven model developed during COVID-19

The Oregon Farmworker Health Program (OFHP) – formerly Protecting Oregon Farmworkers (POF) – was created during the COVID-19 pandemic as the outreach component for the Food Security and Farmworker Safety (FSFS) program.

FSFS was a multi-agency task force created by former Governor Brown to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on Oregon's food supply and farmworkers.

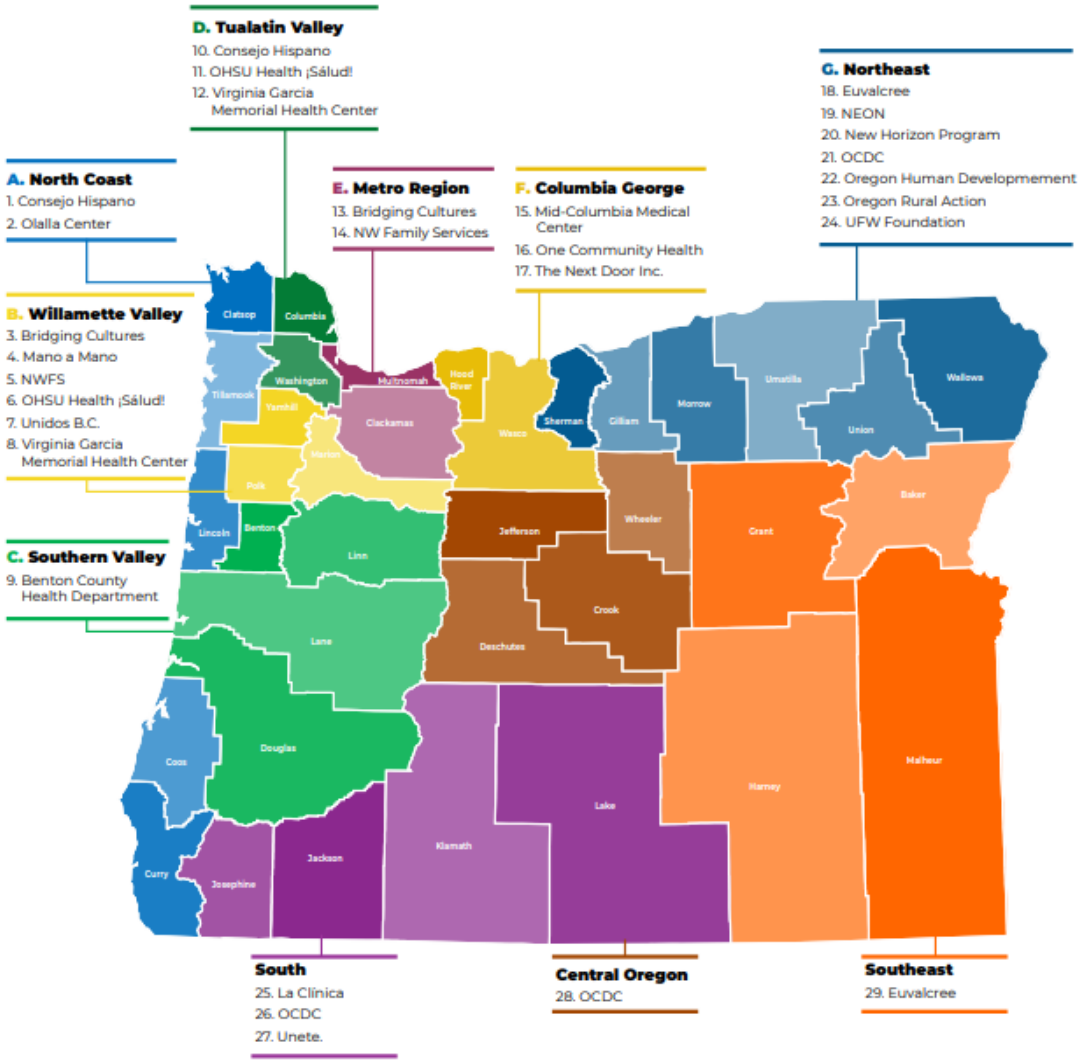
OCHE coordinated FSFS in collaboration with other agencies and the COVID-19 Recovery and Response Unit (CRRU).



OFHP Strategy

Trusted local partnerships rooted in community

- Grant contracts with 23 Community Partners including nonprofits, FQHCs, and LPHAs – over 10 million in funding distributed.
- Face-to-face outreach in regions with high levels of agriculture and food processing.
- Emphasis on rural communities and hard to reach locations such as farms and migrant camps.



Impact

Outreach Connections

2.5m

Wraparound services provided

450k

PPE Distributed

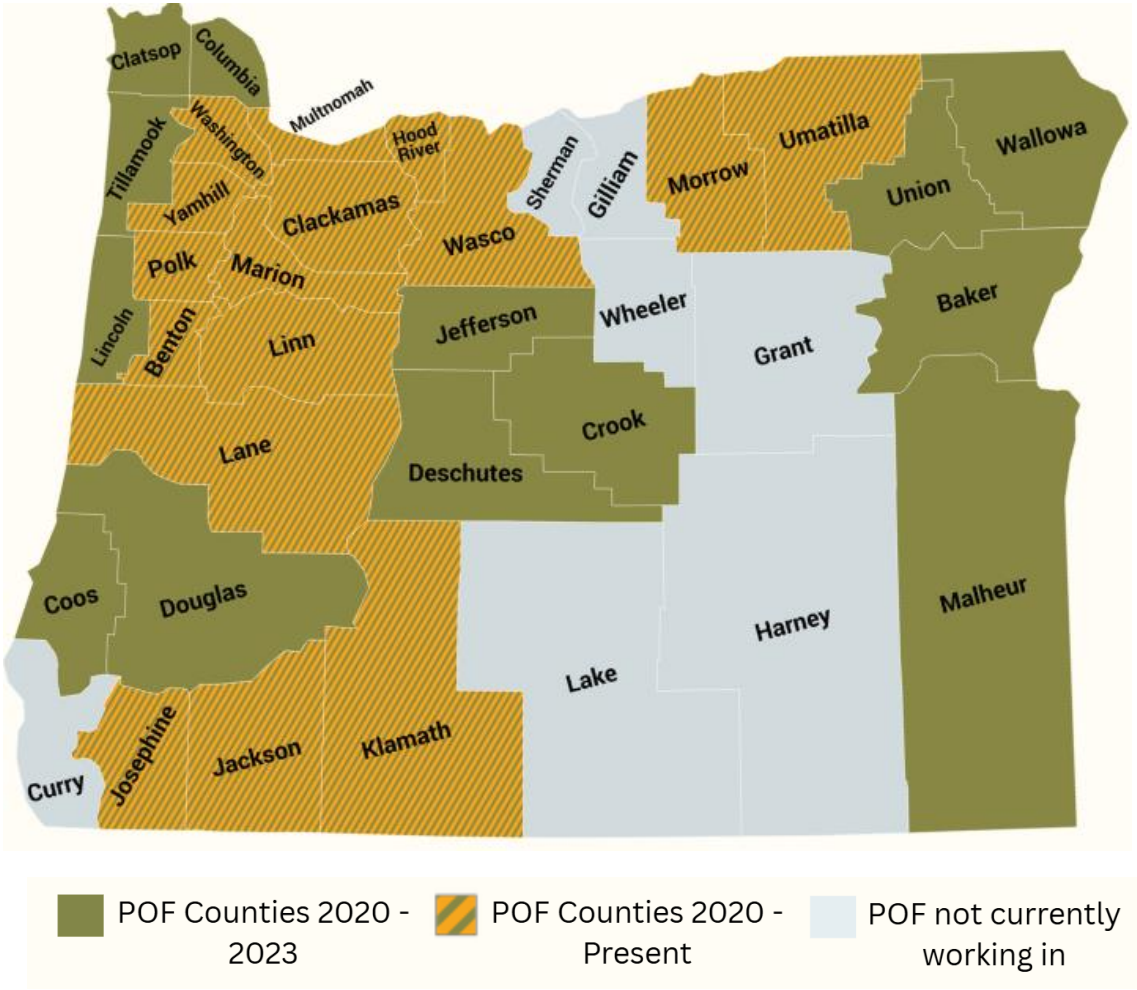
1.8m

Individuals vaccinated

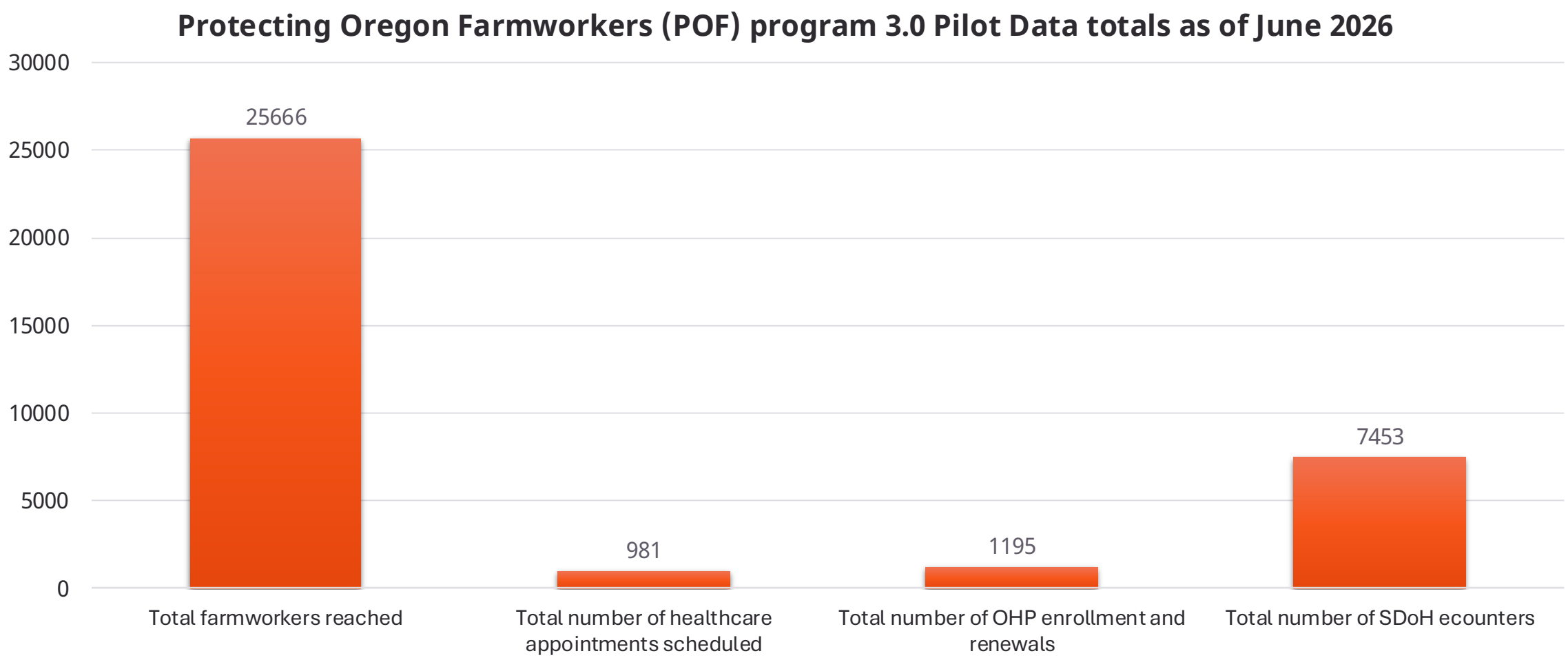
66K

Current partnerships (grant funded)

- Grantees serving rural areas in key parts of the state.
- Expansion of grant program
- Strong focus on
  - Healthcare System Navigation (HSN) – **accessing** services
  - Women's health
  - Evaluation and research partnerships
- Relationship building and strategic partnerships
- Employer engagement



POF cumulative data as of June 2026



Reach

Since January 2025, OFHP Community Partners have visited roughly **1,720** different locations in rural areas of the state including:

- Churches/faith-based locations
- Housing
- Farms and orchards
- Food processing plants
- Labor contractors
- Community events
- Schools

How is OFHP addressing the barriers to access care among rural farmworkers?

- Support with accessing healthcare/OHP
- Support with understanding the healthcare system
- Support with navigating the healthcare system
- Addressing the barriers to care
- Promoting preventive care access
- Helping connect/refer to programs and resources that support their health
- Helping them access the programs/benefits that are best for them
- Outreach



Other Initiatives

- Organize and establish a farmworker health information hub to centralize resources
- Continue to strengthen partnerships in rural areas to maximize impact
- Identify solutions for farmworker health in Oregon through data and research
- Expand and enhance grant programming to address farmworker health risks
- Establish a farmworker health forum in Oregon to share best practices and models
- Continue to advocate for resources
- Establish a statewide Collaborative open to public in order to share information and resources

Activity

In small groups/tables discuss the following prompt:

- What is one action that our agency, organization or team can take to support reducing barriers in access to care among the farmworker community in Oregon?
- What existing strengths or resources do we already have that we can leverage to support farmworker health?

How you can support



Connect



Advocacy



Voice



Partner



Support

OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY





Questions?

Thank you!

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact the Office of Community Health and Engagement at community.outreach@oha.oregon.gov.

External Relations Division
Office of Community Health and Engagement
500 Summer St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
Office of Community Health and Engagement web page