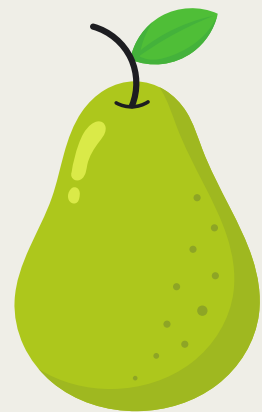


Measuring Safety and Health Risks at Yakima Valley Packing Houses



Angie Lara, Community Engagement & Basebuilding Educator

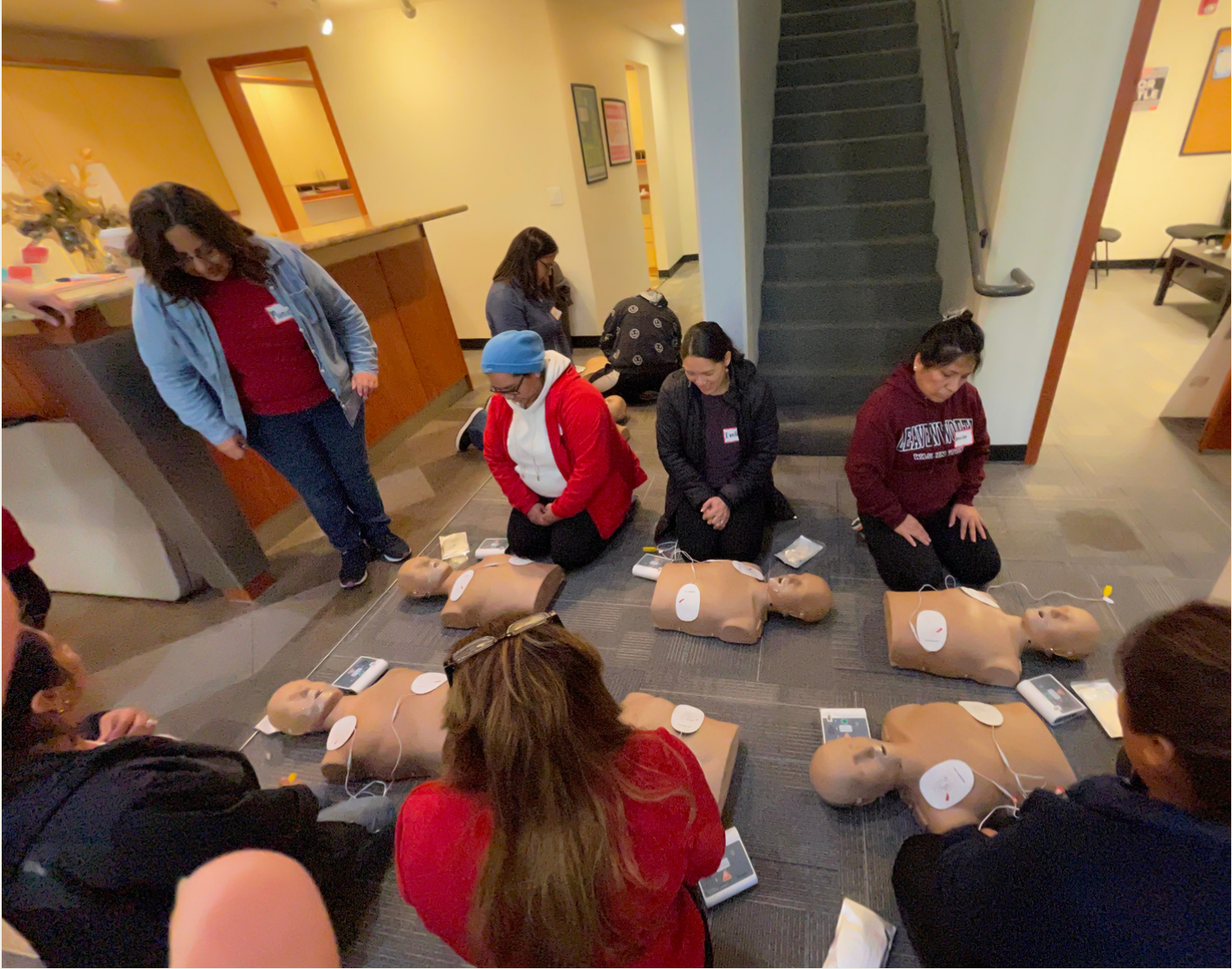
Colleen Fontana, Basebuilding Director

October 19, 2023

FAIR WORK
CENTER



WHO WE ARE:



**FAIR WORK
CENTER**



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Seven focus groups with fruit packing house workers
- 25 participants
- between 4 -20 years of experience in agricultural work



TO BETTER UNDERSTAND...

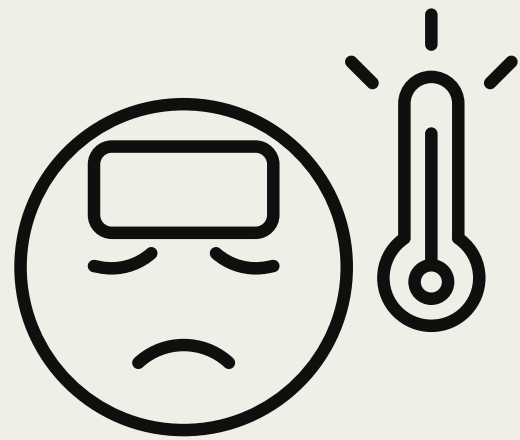
1. work conditions,
2. experiences with reporting workplace injuries and/or risks,
3. experiences with Labor & Industries (L&I), and
4. recommendations of changes bodega workers would like to see

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS



1. Where are the risks in your job?

2. Who do you speak with when there is a safety risk or problem at work? What happens when you file a report?



3. What do you do when you are sick or when you have to care for a family member that is sick? Are you paid for your sick days if you need to stay home?



4. Can you share a time you have interacted with Labor and Industries and what happened?

5. In your opinion, what changes would you recommend to Labor and Industries and your employer to improve safety?

6. What kinds of things make you feel safe at work?



MAIN TAKEAWAYS



Hazards and health risks for packing house workers



Challenges in reporting or resolving health and safety risks



Recommendations for employers and Labor and Industries to improve health and safety conditions

HAZARDS AND HEALTH RISKS

Workplace risks and health summary



Planks or other materials on the ground cause falls



Slippery stairs that can cause falls or accidents



Fast-paced, repetitive work that put participants at increased risk for musculoskeletal injuries



Exposure to harsh chemicals that cause respiratory problems and/or allergic reactions



Lack of personal protective equipment



Heavy machinery without safety mechanisms put workers at risk for serious injuries, such as loss of fingers or limbs



Pressure and mistreatment from supervisors causes stress, anxiety, and depression



Lifting heavy boxes often cause back injuries

CHALLENGES IN REPORTING

- Fear
- Lack of information and/or communication
- Lack of support / examples of success
- Doubt in Lnl process
- Language barriers
- Discrimination or retaliation



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

FOR LABOR & INDUSTRIES:



- Trauma-informed and sensitivity trainings for employees and employers
- Recorded service calls and accountability for customer service
- Language accessibility and culturally relevant support
- Surprise health and safety inspections
- Improved communication about case status and changes

FOR EMPLOYERS:



- Access to retirement benefits and affordable healthcare
- Fair pay and accurate record keeping for employees
- Adequate training for managers and supervisors

OUR WORK CONTINUES!

- Leadership development and peer to peer support
- Workplace organizing campaigns
- Solidarity and community building
- Community Clinics / Know your rights and enforcement support



Thank you!



Huge thank you to University of Washington researcher Érica Chavez Santos who collaborated with us to review and code the findings to produce a detailed report.

Research reported in this presentation was supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) under Federal Training Grant T42OH008433. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of NIOSH.