

## THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM

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Since 1995, AFOP and its membership have benefited from having Health & Safety Programs by impacting over 400,000 farmworkers through trainings, direct services and referrals. Through our programs, a network of over 130 trainers focus on the potentially dangerous effects of pesticides, highlighting symptoms associated with acute pesticide poisoning, the importance of seeking medical attention, and raising awareness about chronic effects of pesticide exposure.

We recognize that farmworkers face many obstacles to improving their lives, and the nature of their work is dangerous and harmful not only to their health, but to the health of their family members as well. Therefore, in the last two years we have combined and consolidated all of our experiences, programs and funding opportunities to build the successful Farmworker Health & Safety Training Program. We have been able to structure a program that benefits not only the farmworker community but also AFOP's membership while AFOP's Health & Safety complies with its funders.

In 2013, our network of trainers impacted over 27,000 farmworkers through pesticide safety and heat stress prevention trainings. As of today, our network of trainers has trained over 23,000 and we still have to count August, September and October.

In the past couple of days we have collected some thoughts of the agencies participating in our Health & Safety Programs. These are just a few of the benefits mentioned by our trainers and coordinators:

- Maintain an active relationship with AFOP
- Unrestricted funding for participating sites
- Free exposure to local media (radio, news, newspaper)
- Flexibility of the program accommodates each site's needs
- Outreach with dual purpose (training program and recruitment for NFJP)
- Building strong relationships with growers and the local farmworker community
- New funding opportunities
- Trainers become community leaders; Staff engagement
- Community presence and involvement
- Expand the capacity of the organization by actually having a health & safety program
- Gaining access into difficult to enter corporations, such as Monsanto
- Multiple partnerships with other organizations, government agencies, community leaders, service providers, among others
- Free staff professional development

But most important of all, together we are helping farmworkers and their families to have a safer and healthier life by providing them with valuable information and the necessary tools to take better decisions for themselves and their loved ones.

Our new program year starts in January 2015. If you are interested in participating or supporting our programs, feel free to contact me at [forti@afop.org](mailto:forti@afop.org).