



LITERACY AND MIGRANT FARM WORKERS

Mobility affects every aspect of the lives and learning of migrant farm workers and their families. Although migrants bring few belongings as they travel from crop to crop and from labor camp to labor camp, they do bring a wealth of experience, motivation, and resourcefulness.

The agricultural industry in Southwest Florida employs more than 16,000 seasonal employees each year. Of these employees, 90% are estimated to be migrants or individuals who come to the area specifically for these jobs. The majority of the migrant workers arrives in September or October and leave in May or June. When the dependents of the migrant workers are added, the total migrant population coming to Southwest Florida each winter reaches almost 31,000.

A study entitled, *Farm Workers in Southwest Florida*, found that the typical farm worker is male, between 20-40 years old, of Mexican origin and has five to six years of formal education. It is estimated that 37% of the farm workers live with their families and earn about \$7,000 annually.

SOURCE: Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Of the 1383 total participants in the Adult Migrant Program, the following (number and percentage) reported the following characteristics:

Category	Description	Number	Percentage
Farm Worker Group	Instate Migrant	0	0
	Interstate Migrant	254	18.37
	Seasonal	1129	81.63
Sex	Male	349	25.23
	Female	1034	74.77
Education Status	Dropout, 8 th Grade or Less	471	34.06
	Dropout, 9 th - 12 th Grade	479	34.63
Average Grade Completed: 9.03			
Ethnic Group	White	35	2.53
	Black	365	26.39
	Hispanic	981	70.93
Family Status	Single Head of Household	392	28.34
	Families w/dependents under 18 years old	977	70.64
Other Barriers	Limited English	527	38.11
	Handicapped	57	4.12
	Reading Skill less than 9 th grade level	385	27.84
	Long term Agricultural Employment	762	55.10
	Multiple Barriers to Employment (3+)	1063	76.86
	Offender	79	5.71
	Math Skill less than 9 th grade level	380	27.48
Labor Force Status	Unemployed	1022	73.90

SOURCE: Florida Department of Education, State of Florida Department of Education Adult Migrant Program