

TITLE: Assessing the Implications of State-Level Overtime Pay Legislation among Latine Agricultural Workers

ABSTRACT:

The requested funding aims to evaluate the impact of Oregon's HB 2358, which provides overtime pay to farmworkers, on Latine and immigrant farmworkers' physical and mental health, quality and amount of time spent with family, amount of time worked, income, and access to healthcare. Farmworkers, who are essential to sustaining food supplies in the United States, face numerous occupational and environmental hazards, including long working hours and low pay. Although farmworkers are excluded from federal overtime compensation protection in the Fair Labor Standards Act, eight states, including Oregon, have passed legislation providing overtime pay to these workers. This study will draw on community-based and participatory research techniques, collaborating with local community organizations to engage with farmworkers in a series of focus groups to learn about their initial knowledge of and expectations related to the newly implemented overtime law. The initial data collection will serve as pilot data for a larger R01 grant proposal. The first aim of this study is to explore the perceived impact of the phase-in law on agricultural workers' physical and mental health, quality and amount of time spent with family, amount of time worked, income changes, and access to healthcare. The second aim is to assess agricultural workers' understanding of the law, perceived violations of the law experienced by workers, and their ability to report such violations. This will include examining how community organizations serving the population can facilitate this process. The third aim is to convene a group of subject matter experts, including community activists, supporters, and leaders, and embedded community workers who will be able to provide critical information related to how their lived experiences intersect with the research goals. They will also help to synthesize study findings and develop evidence-based recommendations for supporting farmworkers' mental health and well-being and aid with dissemination efforts within local communities. The findings from this study will provide critical insights into the impact of Oregon's overtime law on farmworkers' physical and mental health, income, and quality of life. This research will also help to develop evidence-based recommendations to support farmworkers' mental health and well-being going forward. Moreover, this study will provide a framework for other states, such as California, to draw upon when supporting farmworkers in reference to overtime pay. Ultimately, this research will contribute to the body of knowledge about the impact of overtime pay legislation on the well-being of farmworkers, and inform policy decisions that affect this vital workforce.