**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Disaster Preparedness and Response: Serving Farmworkers**

**Part I – National Farmworker Jobs Program Grantee (NFJP) Experiences**

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LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to today's "Disaster Preparedness and Response: Serving Farmworkers" webinar. And I'm going to turn things over to your moderator today, Lianna Shannon. She's a workforce analyst with the National Monitor Advocate Team for the U.S. Department of Labor. Lianna, take it away.

LIANNA SHANNON: Thank you, Laura. And welcome, everyone. This is part one of our two-part series on "Disaster Preparedness and Response: Serving Farmworkers." I want to thank the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs, and specifically Kathleen Nelson and Kendra Moesle, for helping to organize this presentation. I also want to thank all of you for joining us today to learn about this important topic. Today, we will focus on National Farmworkers Jobs Program grantees – or NFJP experiences – in responding to various natural disasters.

As Laura mentioned, my name is Lianna Shannon and I work for the U.S. Department of Labor's National Monitor Advocate Team, and I will be moderating today's presentations. We have many speakers today, and we look forward to hearing from each of them.

Now, before we begin, we'd like to take a little poll. If you haven't already done so, please note in the pole box whether your organization has experienced a natural disaster in the past year. And if so, what kind? So I'll just give you a moment to put your information in that.

OK. So the numbers are growing, and it really looks like, fortunately, many of you have not experienced a natural disaster in the past year. However, some of you have experienced a hurricane. And most of you have experienced – or those who have had to deal with a natural disaster – that was flooding. So those are definitely some things that we'll be talking about today when hearing from our presenters.

Unfortunately, so many of these natural disasters have been affecting our organizations and those we put up across the country. Therefore, it's all the more important to learn from each other. We need to hear each other's experiences – there's other organizations going through this – and how they were able to serve farmworkers in these times of need.

So today's objectives are to understand the impact of natural disasters on farmworkers, agriculture and farmworker service providers. We want to hear how NFJP grantees responded to the particular disaster or disasters that hit their area, and to identify the lessons learned.

Our first presenter is Gerald Williams. He is the coordinator of the Farmworker Career Development Program at Immokalee Technical College in Florida. Gerald, thank you so much for being here with us today. Over to you.

Gerald Williams: All right. It's great to be here today. My name is Gerald Williams. I'm coordinator for the Farmworker Career Development Program here at Immokalee Technical College. I'm also the coordinator for workforce education here. Hang on just one second. Let me get to the mouse. OK.

And we're going to talk about the impact on southwest Florida first with – we were impacted by Hurricane Irma back in September. We had several of our communities in our county that were affected – Immokalee being one of those that was greatly affected – effects on the farms and the farmworker population here, the recovery period, which is still ongoing – and today the lessons that we've learned from this.

Hurricane Irma started as a little tropical storm back in August and dissipated over Alabama on September the 13th. You can see it there in that picture just north of Puerto Rico. The track of Irma – the cone was actually predicted for all of Florida, and it wobbled back and forth from the east coast to the west coast. It was eventually that it was predicted to come up through the west coast of Florida. Unfortunately for us, it made its way right up through the center of the state. The bottom left picture there is its position just a little bit to the north of Puerto Rico. You can see the track on the right-hand side there that they had predicted.

Irma was a very formidable storm with winds up to 185 miles an hour at one point. Southwest Florida began to feel the feeder bands coming in on the ninth of September, which was a Saturday. All of our schools closed down on the seventh of that week, so it gave us plenty of time to prepare – and also to start to prepare the community. Fortunately, one of the things that did happen was as Irma made its way across it did touch Cuba, so that slowed it up some.

And then it made its northerly turn that you can see on the left-hand picture there. The right-hand picture shows the actual track, and then the projected track. But Irma decided that it was going to go straight up through the middle of the state, which was good for the state of Florida. It was not good for Immokalee, however, because it put Immokalee in that eye wall for most of the day on Sunday – winds up to 135 to 140 miles per hour.

Communities that were affected – so that you know where we're at – we're in the southwest portion of Florida in Collier County. We had – Marco Island was impacted directly. We had east Naples that was also impacted; Draum (ph) which is a very small city in the center of the state – or the county there; and Immokalee, of course, up at the top.

Marco Island is one of the more fluent areas in the county. The eye of the storm crossed directly over Marko. If you look at the picture there on the left, you can see that there are a lot of condominiums there. But the storm surge crossed right over Marco Island. There were some instances – there were houses recording that they had flood water up into their second story. So we're talking a good 12 to 15 feet above sea level there.

Everglades City is a small, fishing village two hours south. It's major source of income is fish farming. Irma destroyed almost all of that industry completely. As it came ashore, it took the water out of the bay. And then as it went north of Everglades City, it brought that water back in as you can see there on the right. It caused substantial flooding, a lot of home damage – 75 percent of all the homes at the end of the storm are (less than ?) habitable. 90 percent of the businesses were destroyed. That community is still in really rough shape today. About 40 percent of the community is still without housing, so they're working desperately on trying to get housing down there. We do have some farmworkers that come from down there that work in the fish farming industry, so it did impact their lives.

Immokalee is what we want to focus on. It's a small, unincorporated community in the northeastern part of Collier County. Approximately 28,000 residents – permanent residents – live here. But during the growing season, which is from October to about April – May, it can expand up to 48,000 to 50,000. So we were fortunate that Irma came in before the growing season so that the majority of the population was not here at that particular time.

These are hard-working families with very little – many of their homes or trailers – and most of them are rentals. If you look at the top picture on the left there, those are rental trailers that they live in. The bottom picture is the farmers market before the storm. It's a major source of income here at Immokalee, and also allows us to obtain some really fresh vegetables – fruits and vegetables here.

Photo after the storm – now that was a little girl that I snapped a picture of standing on the front porch of her trailer that had been demolished. Believe it or not, the people were still living in that trailer, as uninhabitable as it was. The bottom picture there is what's left of the Farmer's Market. That part of town completely went underwater. In some places, it was as much as five feet deep. So there were a lot of the houses over there that were definitely severely damaged.

According to the fire department and the county, we only had 69 structures that were destroyed, but this was immediately after the storm, as we later found out that that number went up. But it did affect some 600 people – think, well 69 structures and 600 people. That's 10 per structure almost, and that's what we have in many cases here in Immokalee. Three-fourths of all the trailers that were left were uninhabitable, although people still did continue to live in them. Many of the farmworkers either left the area or they were forced to live with family members, whose – maybe their home or their trailer had survived the storm.

Next photo there after – these are photos after – you can see the one on the top left there where the home was completely destroyed. Both of these are trailers. Trailers seemed to sustain the biggest part of the damage. The trailer on the bottom there – although these people – the bottom left – they did leave. They returned back to their home. They fixed that roof and covered it and were living back in it by the end of the week. There's that same little girl again. I don't know how I got that picture in their twice. And then the bottom trailer was completely destroyed.

The effects on farming and farmworkers – you can see there on the left – all the fields went underwater. They were all flooded, and they didn't dry up very quickly. It took almost a week for many of them to get the water out so that they could start their farms and start growing again. The citrus industry took a heavy hit and all the leaves on the trees were gone, as you can see from that picture. A lot of fruit was on the ground.

And it took a while for the farming industry to recover and to start back again. Well, farmworkers – they live day-to-day, so they needed to eat. They needed to do something. Construction was picking back up, as everybody was repairing from the storm. You can see there on the top right, people were salvaging what they could out of their homes. And then the bottom right is they're working on their homes, trying to put them back together.

But one of the things that we've noticed is that a lot of our farmworkers left farming and went into construction work because right now we need lots of roofs to be repaired. So they're working in that area, and what I'm seeing is that some of the farmers are struggling a little bit to find workers to pick the crops.

Hang on. I'm a one-man show here right now.

Immokalee and Everglades City were – are most dependent upon – in fact, the entire county is most dependent upon the school system. They're the largest employer in Collier County. We have over fifty schools in this area. Immokalee Technical College is the main hub in Immokalee for the school system in the adult area, and that's where we're housed. And Immokalee Technical College played a huge part in the recovery.

If you look at the picture in the top left there, you'll see that that's our banquet facility, which was turned into a large donation storage facility where the items came in from around the country. They were organized and ready to help for delivery. The bottom picture there is people waiting in line at one of the local high schools to get supplies.

What happened with us here at Immokalee Technical College which was kind of unique is that, like I said, we became the storage facility for a lot of the donations. And the school system created an electronic work order that they communicated out to the elementary and middle and high schools. And anyone whose family was devastated by the storm – they could – their teachers could put them in a work order with the items that were needed to help them.

We farmworkers and students here at iTECH would take and package those items – sort them, package them and also take them out for delivery. We sent farmworker participants out with the deliveries because many of the farmworkers in our community do not speak English, or they speak very little English. So we had to have someone to translate for them. We became what we called the Amazon delivery center for Irma. As we passed out these donations, everybody knew that this is where they could come. Many of the students helped to sort and pack this.

You can see on the right there many of our homes still look this way. They have the temporary roof coverings. We are not, by any means, ready for this summer as a lot of our homes look just like that. They're working quickly to get the roofs back on and get things back open for a lot of people, but that's taking a long time. Recovery is being really slow.

The next slide there is what I call students helping students. Many of our students here in the school were farmworkers, and they come from very poor families. Their homes could have been destroyed or damaged equally as well, but when they came to school they wanted to focus on helping others. And the top pictures there on the left are students actually going out and helping cover these trailers and get the homes at least where they're sort of protected.

The bottom picture is our donation center. Many of those are farmworker students that were there to sort and pack and deliver. And then on the right-hand side – down on the bottom there – those are our practical nursing students who spent three hours in the heat – sweating and unloading that semi. And we actually had three of those semis come in that looked just like that.

Today and beyond – one of the things is that I want to make sure everybody understands about Immokalee is that we're comprised of a lot of little agencies and a couple very large ones. Immokalee Inter-Agency Council – they meet once a month at our local one-stop here. We have the sheriff's department, which is probably the second largest employer other than one of our businesses. Collier County Public Schools – they employ about 3,700 to 4,000 people. And then there's the Bureau of Emergency Services, which helps to coordinate all of this.

And the things that – as I asked around and contacted people – what do you think we've learned. Well, the first thing we've learned is that all the agencies working together made a huge difference. And it did take somebody to coordinate that, and unfortunately, that fell back on the school system. Many of our principals and directors stepped up huge there to help direct those services.

The big thing that we've learned is that preparation is the key. I think Irma slipped up on us because it had been some time since we've had a major storm, so nobody was really prepared. I live in Immokalee. The street that I lived on is comprised mostly of Hispanics – some of them farmworkers; some of them working construction. They really had never been through anything like this, so they were definitely afraid.

We need to provide the community with supplies before the storm. Not necessarily after the storm, but prep people ahead of time. One of the things we're doing now is we're putting together a pamphlet of things to do a month out, things to do a week out, things to do the day before, what you should do during a storm, and then what needs to be done after the storm – what you need to be prepared for.

They're using the amber alert system to provide storm information. That's something that's happened in the state of Florida.

The county itself, through the Bureau of Emergency Services, is providing more shelters, not just schools because we had 28 schools that could be shelters – 27 of them opened. Most of them opened during the storm because they just had such an influx of people. Immokalee High School, which is just across the street, had a total of 1,500 people. Immokalee Middle School, which is adjacent to the high school, had another 1,500 people. So there was 3,000 people within just a couple blocks of us here. Those schools were full, so they had to start to open other places.

They're providing more locations with generators and trained staff to use them. The county is looking at making it mandatory so that every gas station has to have a generator; every grocery store has to have a generator, and they have to have people trained to use them. They're also mandating that all power polls be transformed – turned over into concrete, rather than the wood like we have now. Restoring power quickly to the hospitals and other emergency buildings is important, and organizing the donations is critical to get the supplies to those that need it most.

And I'm going to share a little story with you here. We did a lot of work with Immokalee Fire Department – volunteer fire department here – and a lot of the donation centers. And they reported to us that they were seeing – is that if they had a donation site of 400 people, 100 of them would be the same people they saw the day before, and the day before that. So there had to be some coordination there to ensure that people weren't hoarding – that the donations were getting to the right people – to those who needed it most.

We did coordinate with the local law enforcement and first responders to locate those in need of assistance. We have a (wire D ?) on our campus – that's a deputy on our campus who was able to provide us with direction. "Hey, look. This community – they need help in this area." And we would send students; we would send supplies. Almost every time, it was always the farm working community.

NFJP – or in my case it's the Farmworker Career Development Program – is using the federal dollars that we've received from the federal government to purchase prep kits for each one of our participants. The other thing that we've done as a farm working organization is that we're preparing what we call stipends. These are support checks that we're having made ready for our participants in the event that we do have a storm that could strike our area. Right now, it takes me about 30 days to get that stipend check out. Well, what they've worked out is the system, so I can have that check out within seven to 14 days. So that'll be a great benefit.

And I believe that's going to be about it for me. Yes. Now I'll turn it over to Paul and Norma.

MS. GARCIA: Thank you so much. Hi. I'm Norma Garcia from California Human Development, and I'm the Special Programs Manager for our region. First of all, I want to say thank you for inviting us to share our experience with you in how we've been part of the response team during the natural disasters. And we have experience in northern California over the past years, and actually it's been a long seven years.

The first disaster that we want to talk about is the five-year drought. As you can see in the map, the drought started in 2011, and it progressed in 2015 with the entire state of California suffering from the drought. It shows the severity of the tough conditions around the state using federal key indicators such as the soil moisture content, the stream flow, and precipitation. It highlights how the drought's reached an intensity and expanded over the past five years. Much of the state experienced exceptional drought conditions for two years in 2014 and 2015. Our service area – we're in 31 northern counties in California. If you dropped a line in the middle of the state, every county above that line we cover. CBOC, (CET projects ?), and ETR covered the rest of the state.

The drought affects everyone. 80 percent of California (with the main stream ?) exceptional drought – we're actually feeling the heat. $810 million in losses in Central Valley alone for keeping the (filth ?) on farms. They spend $453 million to pump ground water – 428,000 acres, of 5 percent of the irrigated crop land in the central valley. The central coast in southern California was not planted, and that created over 70,000 jobs lost in agriculture – lost in jobs.

In some areas of the state, the ground water has become so overtaxed that the earth was literally sinking. Multiple years of warm temperatures and dry conditions – we have had severe effects on environmental conditions. Degrading the habitat for fish, water burst, and another wildfire, also killing millions of trees and contributing to more prevalent and intense wildfires. And like the (states out of California ?) suspected to – that we'll get dryer and northern California will get hotter than usual.

The assistance that we have been providing – temporary housing assistance through 4,126 support services representing $2,256,882. In addition, through a National Dislocated Worker grant, we were able to place 180 individuals working an average of six months. The jobs that they could perform were specific drought-impacting irrigation to public and non-profit facilities.

You would think that the drought would be – you would think that after the drought, we'll be happy to receive a little rain, and yes. You're right. But the problem with – we get not so much little rain, but we got a lot of rain in a very short period of time. A few of the storms hit across California. It started on December 9, 2016 and moved more intense on January 3rd, 2017. The floodings of 2017 occurred at the end of one of California's worst droughts on record.

In many parts – and simply put – they still were unprepared to handle the huge volume of rain as now, to the point that Governor Brown declared the state of California – the state of emergencies in 52 of 58 counties. And 34 of them were declared federal disaster.

The California Department of Transportation has estimated nearly $700 million just to repair the storm damage to highways. Erosion damage to spill ways at the Oroville Dam leads to – leaves the risk of severe flooding, evacuations of nearly 200,000 residents. The cause of the Oroville Dam failure included inadequate signing, maintenance, and repair costs – are likely to exceed $500 million. But, actually the Oroville is just one of many aging large dams across the state. The state of California needs to spend at least $34 billion to upgrade dams, levies, and other flood management, install structures.

Massive flooding can lead to road closures. All our stone water structures damaged our (potential ?) infrastructures, caused more erosion, (interfered in ?) nearly 200,000 people are actually leaving and living in coastal areas. 873 miles of coastal roads are at risk from flooding due to the tides, storms, and other periods of elevated sea level. Coastal tourism is accounting for 39 percent of all of California's $7.6 billion ocean economy and $660 billion in wages and $1.7 trillion in gross domestic products.

We were able to provide housing assistance. We were fortunate to have national – receive the National Dislocated Worker grant, and we were able to place 144 individuals working in an average of six months to help with the cleanup and repair of public and non-profit facilities.

Unlike the drought, floods have the bigger impact on people's lives. An exceptional drought does not kill people or damage property. Flooding does. And because we did not have enough, the fires came.

The first of these fires took place in Lake County. Please note that this fire took place at the end of the drought and before the floods. Because of the drought, the fire really kind of was more destructive. As you can see in the slide – see the destruction. And to think this fire was started just because of a faulty wire in a hot tub. The fire started on September 12, 2015. 76,067 acres burned; 1,955 structures destroyed, including 1,322 homes, 27 apartment buildings, and 73 businesses, evacuating up to 10,000 people. And there were 4 fatalities.

We were fortunate to have received the national dislocated grant to receive temporary employment – 382 fire-affected and long-term unemployed individuals. Described on the slide, about $8.5 million were contributed to the local communities by wages and purchases.

On October 8 and 9, the wildfires broke out through Napa, Lake, Sonoma, Mendocino, Butte, Yuba, Solano, and Nevada counties. The two most affected counties were Napa County and Sonoma County. The fires rapidly grew to become extensive from 1,000 acres to well over 20,000 acres – each within a single day.

By October 14th, the fires had burned more than 210,000 acres, while forcing 90,000 people to evacuate from their homes. Unfortunately, the fires killed 44 people and hospitalized at least 185, making the week of October 8 the deadliest week in wildfires in California history. Many of those killed in the fires are believed to have died on October 8th or October 9th, when most of the fires broke out overnight.

The cause of the fires is presumed to be – started by a – (inaudible) – transformer (probably ?) due to the heavy winds that were actually – those winds at that night were going as strong – at 70 miles per hour.

The October fires were the costly group of wildfires, causing at least $9.4 billion, and predicted to cost the U.S. economy at least $85 billion. The largest portions of the portion of the losses was to residential property. Additional losses were to automobiles, commercial property including business interaction insurance, and to crops. A total of 8,400 structures were destroyed, and the city of Sonoma was a long – lost 3,000 homes, or five percent of their houses' (stock ?).

Many farmworkers are renters and some rental house in there was actually being – was burned. It was being replaced with most costly housing. The fact worsened by the (inaudible) housing crisis. Unfortunately, those who can rebuild their homes face level shortage and a steep level cost.

At least two dozen wineries in Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties have been partially or fully destroyed. In Sonoma alone, the county agricultural sector imports between 4,000 to 6,000 farmworkers each year. The majority of them are Latino or undocumented. Wineries are the backbone of their regions; it actually brings in approximately $1.92 billion per year. The possible effects of smoke on the wines are uncertain at the moment, but the winemakers are carefully evaluating the wines to make particular decisions about them.

The fires were 100 percent contained as of October 30, 2017. And what is happening today – we are at the beginning stages of another temporary drought program due to the fires in October of last year. Because of – the fires covered seven counties we're planning on enrolling 990 individuals to participate in this program. We have provided housing to (prodigals ?) and assistance to the amount of $86,173.

And that's it for me. And Paul?

PAUL CASTRO: Yes. Good afternoon. Good morning. Good afternoon. My name is Paul Castro. I'm the director of – (inaudible) –services – (inaudible) – occupation. (Inaudible) –development of occupational programs.

But if you can see on the slides, in the last seven years, we have had a drought, the fires, the floods, and – without stop – every year there's disaster that's (needed ?). But – (inaudible) –hardship on southern California. So as we're looking at – working with – providing services to farmworkers, please note that the drought definitely – I think we agree – had the most setback on the home, because of the number of acres it covers – we are not able to farm. And, as said on the first slide, about 17,000 farm jobs were lost. But the number is – I'm sure is bigger than that. Also–

NORMA GARCIA: Hello. Sorry to interrupt this. Can you just get a little closer to the speaker – the microphone?

MR. CASTRO: Yes. Sorry – I just. As you can see, the problem with the drought – with the plan – we were able to provide temporary employment – people that work – comprise those jobs were mostly farmworkers. The – one of the fire in the county – most of the people who worked there were (local ?).

Some of the challenges that we faced as well, the last seven years is that – the reality is that in northern California, people in Sonoma – they (endure – affected by ?) these fires. Another thing is we have a large number of undocumented farmworkers. We were able to provide assistance –

MS. SHANNON: Paul? Sorry. One more time. We're just – sorry – having a lot of difficulty hearing you. Are you able to talk louder or get any closer?

MR. CASTRO: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MS. SHANNON: Yeah. That's much better.

MR. CASTRO: OK. I'm sorry. Yeah. So I'm sorry about the – didn't go – get close enough.

So some of the challenges that we faced as we implemented the programs were that – the reality is in northern California at least the (callers ?) that were affected by the disasters – like Napa, Lake. In Sonoma, we have a great number of people who are undocumented, and even though we were able to provide assistance – temporary housing and food and those kind of other things, employment, which was needed – we were not able to provide assistance because of the regulations with the fund that we were receiving.

Also, another thing that we found is that agencies were somewhat reluctant to work collectively. Therefore, it led to duplication of services and, unfortunately some abuse as well. And the other thing is that, specifically up in Lake County, where we had a lot of families who lost a home, there were either elderly homes – elderly owned – or underinsured. We were able – we were not able to provide the assistance that we could, although we wanted to – because of the requirements for the grant.

And also, unfortunately, fear kept many individuals or families from seeking assistance. And the other things is – some of the other things like as was mentioned before – they are unannounced, so having the staff to quickly implement the program is also a challenge. And we're trying to see how we can be better prepared to do some of this rapid response.

And some of the federal funding is also slowing getting to the communities affected by the disasters. And then, as we're looking from both sides, we're looking mainly for public worksites or non-profits. There's a concern with liability and it makes the process of getting some of the worse sites a little bit more difficult because of the concerns with the liability. And then preventing injuries is also some of the things.

So those are some of the challenges. Now, with regards to the lessons – is that – learned is definitely, we saw that the connection with the state, county and local government, specifically with departments that respond to emergencies – we had not developed those relationships. So it is a lesson and definitely an opportunity for us to be able to connect better with those different departments. And we are actually working – having some – and we used the weekend to start developing now – because unfortunately disasters do come. And so we want to be better prepared and better connected so that the response time will be quicker and the resources that we need will be identified and available.

But overall, I think that the – meeting the needs and problems in the community in California was one that we were very, very proud of – the fact that we were able to help a lot of people. Specifically, as the disaster took place and they were in need of temporary housing, food, clothing and those things, we wish that we could have done more. In the long term, recovery which is employment.

OK. Thank you. And now, Stacey Taylor from MET will be your next presenter.

STACEY TAYLOR: Thank you, Paul. Good afternoon, everybody. And thank you very much for including me in this presentation that's, I think, extremely important as the disasters continue to roll along as we've been noticing, I think, with the coverage in Hawaii.

Once again, my name is Stacey Taylor and I am the executive director of MET incorporated – Motivation, Education, and Training is a private non-profit organization. We're located about 30 miles north of Houston. That's where our administrative office is, and we operate about 27 federal, state, and local grant programs, including the National Farmworker Jobs Program, which we operate in about five states. We also do some National Farmworker Jobs Program housing, related work, and YouthBuild as well.

So Hurricane Harvey sort of came to town as a necessary yet unpredictable storm. Houston and the surrounding area is used to hurricanes. It's not anything new to us – typically quite well prepared with evacuations and moving people out of the area quickly. However, Hurricane Harvey was a different animal. It made its way to Houston on August 17th and the water, unfortunately, did not stop rising until about September 3.

So that was about 18 days of not only this torrential downpouring of rain, but then once that did subside, then the water continued to rise, particularly in the bayous. Houston is known as the Bayou City for its plethora of bayous that could not hold the abundance of water. The San Jacinto River was flooding into Lake Houston, which then in turn flooded all the areas around that. Lake Conroe also – rising waters and all of that combined was just devastating consequences.

So Hurricane Harvey was a category four hurricane. It included about 60.58 inches of catastrophic rain, and because of that – because it fell so quickly and in such a short period of time – it triggered mass flooding in the Houston metropolitan area. It inflicted about $125 billion worth of damage and included damage to about 100,000 homes. Unfortunately, 107 people lost their lives due to Hurricane Harvey. 68 of those folks were a direct result of the storm, and 39 people as an indirect result of the storm. Just tragedy.

I've included a few pictures here of the surrounding area of Houston. The majority of people had water up to the second story of their home, so minimum five to seven feet and even higher, as you can see in this photo down here. This is just a local neighborhood. It was so devastating – the winds that it – it'd blow entire structures and leave them like shattered toothpicks in the area. From a transportation perspective, all the cars that were left on the streets or on driveways or in garages were also flooded, which left people stranded in their second-story homes – if they were lucky enough to have a second story.

And then, when the rain came so quickly and the water started rising, the people were not prepared. So as you can see from these two photographs here with all of these boats and emergency vehicles, typically those were private citizens that came into the Houston area once the alert was sent out by the governor and the local merchants and management folks and the mayor of Houston – that Houston was in trouble and the surrounding area, and that we needed rescue boats.

Houston was not prepared. They did not have enough of these vehicles, so people came with boats. It was an incredible sort of collaboration of folks in Texas that hadn't been affected by this storm, and then folks coming from far away states – Louisiana, Oklahoma. They would just drive in at night and put their boats in the water and help to rescue people. And that was just a real sort of – just a dawn. From this storm – was just seeing the outpouring of support for so many Houstonians that were devastated by this storm.

So as the storm subsided, we learned of the disaster declaration in our county. In the state of Texas, 60 counties surrounding Houston were declared disaster areas, and 20 of those counties are directly served by MET. I've listed them here: Angelina, Burleson, Chambers, Montgomery up near San Jacinto, and Trinity, Walker Counties. So we knew we had a pretty big job on our hands for recovery and determining our response.

What we decided to think about as the rain started coming down on the very first day was – what is the potential for the immediate ramifications for our staff and clients, because it became clear very quickly that this rain was going to cause devastating flooding. And the senior managers and myself remained in contact via text message because many of the cell towers were damaged with the rising water and the wind, and so communication was very difficult. And so, text messages seemed to – group text is how we communicated from the start of the storm until the end.

The roadways were impassable, so our staff and our clients were stranded in their neighborhoods or in shelters. Many were stranded, like I said, in their homes on the second story. The shelters, then, became full. So once all of the people came with the boats to get the folks out of the flooded areas, they would take them to the shelters, but the shelters were so – were at capacity. So that became a secondary crisis once the waters started to subside.

There was shortage of fuel and food and the necessary supplies that people needed could not be restocked because the roadways were impassable, so even if a subdivision had power and a Kroger could get open or a major chain grocery store like an H-E-B or even a small, local convenience store – they couldn't get to supply – to those places to restock and resupply. So then fuel and food became a very large concern.

Also, our emergency rooms and hospitals were packed with people with injury. But then also, we were not able to access them because the roadways were completely flooded.

So what we decided to do together as a senior management team was to ensure that we could support our staff first. We knew that if we supported our staff, then they in turn, could support our clients. So we took the approach of the oxygen mask. When you're in an airplane and you have the instructions about takeoff and they say, "If there's an emergency, please place the oxygen mask on yourself prior to placing it on your children or somebody else in need."

So it was a decision that we made very quickly – that we needed to make sure that our staff were safe and secure, and that they were payed because what happened during this time was that that storm hit on a payroll week for MET. And we knew that our staff could not recover from this storm, or even get themselves into a safer situation, without some income.

So we remained in contact, as I mentioned, with our phone tree and we devised a three-tier approach to dealing with our immediate concerns. The number one concern, as I mentioned, was to support our staff, using basically the oxygen mask idea. And then, we were going to have to send people out as best we could to determine the damage to our facilities so that we could then, in turn, support our clients.

Our facilities. We wanted them to be able to act as a refuge for the clients that needed supplies or to use telephones. Our facilities are equipped with – here in the Houston and surrounding area – are equipped with washer and dryer. They have hot showers. They have a full kitchen. And so, we knew if we could get our facilities up and running, that we could then help – act as a place where people could come to pick up supplies or to drop their children off – those kinds of things. But we couldn't do it without people. So the next step was to make sure that our staff were able to come to work and help us sort of mobilize this mission.

As I mentioned, Hurricane Harvey did hit during our payroll week, so it was determined that we could process the payroll from my house and the human resource director's home. So we processed payroll for 432 staff members in my dining room. Thankfully, we did not lose internet services because our payroll is processed completely via the internet. And that was a great lesson to us here at MET as part of our disaster preparedness planning for the future and our lessons learned, as I'll talk to you a little bit about in a few minutes. We really relied on the fact that our payroll was now in the cloud and could be accessed via the internet instead of here, at the administrative office, which we could not get to.

Our facilities were assessed by leading our community partners and staff and clients that lived in the local area – they gave us regular updates via text messages. And also, the local police and fire stations would make – do drive-bys and check on our facilities to determine the extent of the damage. We also relied on local businesses and churches and other non-profits that were in that area to stop by and say, OK, yes, you've got four feet of water in this building; or no, this building is fine, but there's no power.

And so, everybody really was leaning on one another and helping each other out. We knew that we had to quickly assess our clients' needs because we knew that was a critical step in helping. So the senior program directors developed a survey, and we disseminated that survey via the agency's emergency phone tree.

The phone tree, which was developed probably 20 years ago, was instrumental in us disseminating information. Even though we didn't have access to come to a central place, we were able to use the emergency phone tree to get information to those that needed it. So it would start at the top – the emergency phone tree starts with the senior management team – and then information is disseminated throughout the management staff, and then middle management and down to the line staff.

And this is really critical because we have a lot of staff that were depending on us from other states that were not living through a hurricane. And so, we knew that they were concerned whether their paychecks were going to go out – how we were going to take care of clients in other states. So this was a critical tool for us as we assessed the damage in the Houston and surrounding area.

So once we received the information back, we realized that eight of our locations were damaged by Hurricane Harvey, that 30 of our local staff members sustained flood damage to their homes and their vehicles. We learned quickly that 75 of our clients were left homeless. We typically will serve between maybe three to five homeless families per year, and so this boost with 75 families was significant for us. We realized that food and security was becoming a major issue, that temporary housing was now becoming very difficult to secure as the hotels and motels were being flooded with people that had lost everything.

And one thing that was very significant, and something that we're continuing to pay attention to as we recover from Harvey is that on our mental health and wellness reports that I received through our local health care provider – our services that our staff accessed right after and during Hurricane Harvey was increased by 1200 percent. So when we're thinking about physical barriers to the recovery of the homes, the vehicles and those kinds of things, we – when we received this report, we realized – my goodness. We need to be thinking as an agency about mental health services, mental wellness services through this recovery. A 1200 percent increase by our staff accessing the mental health services through our insurances – unprecedented for our agency.

Our response MET staff were the cornerstone. We really wanted to make sure that they felt supported and that they could then take care of their families, so then in turn take care of clients. So we processed that timely. All MET staff received full pay regardless of the time worked. And this enabled many to secure hotel rooms or to evacuate the area. We worked quickly to assess and repair damaged facilities because we understood that the clients needed our facilities open to access the services, such as food and clothing and things that they needed.

We also, then, insured that licensed professional counselors were available for our staff and families. We currently contract with three licensed professional counselors in and around our area of our administrative office here in Houston. And they made themselves available to our staff, and then they showed up at some of these local centers that were damaged. And I think that, from what I'm hearing and some of the post-survey work that we've done, that was very much appreciated by the families and by the staff.

We also collaborated very closely with our community partners for resources and supplies. One thing that we were careful of is that we did not want to become a donation hub for clothing and food. We felt that our organization should be there to direct resources to others, so that our clients could come to MET and say, "We're MET clients. Where can we go for food?" And we would be able to tell them.

What ended up happening in the Houston area is that the outpouring of support was so great that organizations that began taking on clothing donations and food donations were so overwhelmed by the response that they did not have the capacity to hold all of the goods that were coming in – that it ended up becoming almost a detrimental service for the organization that was trying to provide it. So once we established that our facility could be open, we started working with churches and other community partners that did have the infrastructure in place to take on these donations. And then we were able to refer our clients to those places. And that worked out very, very well.

So some of our lessons learned and our long-term planning – one thing that we're working on now – a systematic disaster preparedness plan is part of our agency's long-term strategic plan. We do have disaster preparedness plans in place now. However, they don't – I think they're limiting. And because we've learned so much from Hurricane Harvey, we really want to be updating those and looking at those more carefully.

We're in the process now of transitioning all of our software and technology to cloud-based systems. One thing you learn quickly when you go through a disaster of this nature where you can't get to your administrative office where everything is housed, is that you need to reevaluate your long-term planning for your processing of payments and all of the financial transactions that need to occur during a day to ensure that the clients can be served properly and appropriately – particularly if you have – if you're operating programs outside of your direct administrative office location because those programs are still counting on you, regardless of whether there's a natural disaster.

So MET will also continue to include mental wellness benefits as part of the agency's health plan. That was something new that we included a couple of years ago. And I don't think we realized how critical it would be when a natural disaster struck. So I 'm very grateful that – to say that we will be able to continue to include – and maybe increase – our mental wellness benefits.

We're also working on a mobile MET administrative office, and we're developing that as part of our strategic – long-term strategic plan. So what will basically happen is there will be a team of senior managers that will leave the area once an evacuation is scheduled. And they will set up a temporary administrative office in a location away from the storm track. So for us it could be as far away as Dallas, which is about a four hour drive. And then we can – we'll set up shop in Dallas so that we'll be able to continue to process all of the services that we need from a location other than the administrative office, which we could not get to for several days.

We're also going to make sure that we have flood insurance on all of our facilities. That was a great lesson learned, even though they're not in a flood plain. So here in this area, if you're on a flood plain, then you're required to have flood insurance. If you're not on a flood plain, you can make that decision for yourself. So this was a little bit of a hard lesson learned for us because the entire service area really became a flood plain in a matter of days.

So our recovery continues. We are still working on securing homes – permanent housing for many of our families. However, I'm happy to report that all 75 of those families – we were able to secure temporary housing for. And we transitioned them out of hotels and into temporary apartments and things like that until they can find a more permanent, suitable stasis. We had a lot of construction in the area because the infrastructure has been damaged so badly.

So that is creating jobs for our farmworkers who can come to this area to secure employment. I think what happened in Houston is that people just started really pulling together – and neighbors helping neighbors. And I feel that that's continuing on – that it just didn't stop when the rain stopped – that you can still feel the comradery of neighbors. And people still willing to help one another as the Houston and surrounding area recover.

So I think that's it for me. And I guess I'm going to turn it over now to Albert and Brenda.

ALBERT RIVERA: Hello, everybody. My name is Albert Rivera – regional administrator for PathStone Corporation, Puerto Rico. And I'm here with Brenda Lee Soto Colon. She's the director of internal quality control for PathStone Corporation. And we'll be talking about a little bit – about the rebuilding process in Puerto Rico.

We'll be discussing the impact of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico – like in services, economy, etc. – design of surveys for the communities and results, relief effort activities and the number of families impacted, effective partnerships during the recovery process, and the management of relief efforts while complying with program goals.

Hurricane Maria hit land fall on Puerto Rico on September 20 as the category four hurricane, with winds up to 154. Most of the – intense hurricane that has made landfall in Puerto Rico since the Great Depression. The hurricane knocked out the power for the whole island, and caused damages estimated at more than $100 billion. Estimated number of deaths is 1,065, and they're still verifying that number.

On our next slide, I'd like to show you before and after Maria. On the top part of the slide, you can see from Maria – before Maria – an aerial picture from space. And you can see all the white areas, which is the light. And after Maria, you could see that basically it's all dark. And what you do see with a little bit of light are generators – at the most part were generators, which is pretty intense.

Here we have photographs of towns where the hurricane devastated telephone poles, light poles. People were stranded in their houses because the roads were demolished, destroyed. There was no way of getting out. And this particular picture what says, "Help" – one of these rescue helicopters had to come down and save that family – about five people in that family – three children and two adults.

And, as you can see on the bottom of the slide, there was major flooding – nearly 100 percent of the island. Here you can see other pictures of collapsed bridges, collapsed roads, mud slides, whole communities just moving the front part of their houses, which was incredible to see. We've never seen anything like this in the history of Puerto Rico.

Here we did a tally 175 days after Hurricane Maria, which was March 4th, 2018. At that point, we had 88.3 percent of generation of power, 89.4 percent of power was being consumed, and there was still about 165,000 people – were still without power. And this was 175 days after. 98 percent of the people did have service of water in their homes, which – the water company was pretty good in getting the service back. That was one of the things that was pretty impressive – that they bounced back pretty quick after the hurricane. 98.5 percent of the telecommunications systems have been restored – at that point. And 65 people were still living in shelters 175 days later.

An important part of this section that I would like to highlight is that before all this happened, most of our offices – we didn't have access to them because of – their mainly in the rural areas, where our farmworkers mainly are. And that was a challenge of finding our staff, finding our – if they were fine. Finding all our participants – we had to go door to door to see if they were fine and see if we could resume services. So that was a big challenge.

So the main effects that Hurricane Maria – that we could see from the surveys that we had done – was obviously lack of electricity, cell phone service, no internet service, loss of food, structural damage, damage to houses, loss of furniture and or appliances, loss of personal belongings, flooding. Unemployment skyrocketed because of the – many companies just closed because of the destruction. We also had long lines of – to get gasoline or cash.

For gasoline, you could be in a line for about eight or nine hours just to get maybe $20 of gas. To get cash at the ATM machines or the cash machines – it would take maybe eight to ten hours also. And it was limited. At one point, they would just close because there was no cash left. There was also an issue because we had no electricity and most of the network and internet services were down. People who did have to take food stamps didn't have access to that money either. So there was a lack of food. Schools were closed, and we're still battling a massive migration to the United States.

We did 161 grower assessments to our farmworkers, and six growers said that they had economic losses under $5,000. 44 growers said that they were between $5,000 and $50,000. 16 growers said between $50,000 and $100,000. 38 growers said between $100,000 and $250,000. 27 growers said between $250,000 to $500,000. 10 growers – over $500,000, and 20 growers did not know at that moment. This was pretty – I would say this survey was done about 12 to 13 days after the hurricane. So these were very preliminary numbers.

Something that we were very surprised to find out was that if you could see here on the left-hand side of the pie chart, 40 – 42 percent of our growers said they had no insurance. 40 percent said they had a partial insurance. Only 15 percent were sure that they had insurance, and 3 percent didn't have an answer. They didn't know. This impacted their workforce – the farmworker workforce – where 35 percent said that they will have reduced work hours. 49 percent said that they would not lay off their farmworkers. 11 percent said they would reduce their hours. 3 percent didn't answer, and 2 percent was other where – they didn't answer the question.

But the challenges continue because we still – we're still having a mass exodus from Puerto Rico to the United States. The government of Puerto Rico is guessing that by the end of 2018, 200,000 more residents will have left the U.S. territory for good – moving to places such as Florida, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New England. And it would mean a drop of more than five percent in the island's population. We've had some people come back during these months, but it's not as much as people that are leaving.

Also – so now, we're going to talk about the steps that we – steps taken by PathStone at the Hurricane Maria. Step one was assess the situation and make a plan. We had to design an assessment, distribute collections, report the preparation, and follow up on the assessment. I would like to add that we did assessments for staff, participants, growers, and also community because we did provide services to other types – to regular people in the community that weren't farmworkers.

Step two – OK. Step two was making a difference with data. We did food boxes preparation and distribution, community visits, and applying for new funds in order to assist more families.

So here we have pictures of the first of distribution of boxes – of food boxes – which was in Yauco. You can see that southwest side of the island. And here we have most of our staff providing the service, making the boxes, driving to the mountains because we had to go in small vehicles. Couldn't do it in a truck because a truck would not make it to the areas – the remote, rural areas – where the communities that did need the service would be. So we used small SUVs in order to do that type of work.

So what were the relief effort activities? We provided over 2,000 food boxes, 400 water filters, 420 solar lights, 120 gas stoves. We had generators that we were loaning to extreme cases of people that really needed the generator – housing rehabilitation, micro loans or grants to small businesses.

Where did we do distribution of the food boxes? We impacted 29 municipalities. Over 2,000 families were served. Over 600 individuals – 6,000 I'm sorry – individuals were served. Here you can see the red stars where we actually went and did the distribution of boxes. But we basically did the whole island with our distribution in one way or another.

We had a massive campaign during the whole – taking up the whole island – of services – not only NFJP services, but also with other funders and people that donate with donations and small grants.

Another initiative that we did was also a community laundry mat in the community of Prieto in Yauco. There you have about 200 families that benefited from this initiative, and they also received solar lights and food boxes. There's something particular about this community. If you go to the actual town where the municipality is – just to get to that community, which is within the town of Yauco – is about an hour and a half or an hour and – an hour and a half, an hour and 15 minutes – just to get to that community. So they really needed the service. And the road was devastated. It was incredible.

Some of the partnerships that we've had – Unidos de Puerto Rico, Department of Labor, Citi, the U.S. Department of Housing, NeighborWorks America, Federal Home Loan Bank New York – and surprise – Rural LISC, and Fundacion Comunitaria de – of – Puerto Rico. Above – and additional to that – we've had donations from the PathStone offices, from the states, we've had donations from citizens just sending in things to be handed out. We've had also other people from other states that – they just get in contact with PathStone and say, "Look. We want to donate this. We'll send it to this office." And we just keep on giving to everybody that – what we receive, it goes out. And we make a day of it and provide that service to all these communities that still need – that really do still need the service.

The objectives that we accomplished was that we understood the impact of a natural disaster on farmworkers, on the agriculture, and farmworker service providers. We heard how other NFJP grantees responded to disaster, especially how we had to respond because of communication problems and roads were – we didn't have roads. Roads were nonexistent. For example, my brother – it took him about a week and a half just to drive 10 minutes to the gas station.

MS. SHANNON: Great. Thank you so much Albert and Brenda. And thank you to all of our presenters. As you mentioned, Albert, we have gone through these objectives that we set out to accomplish in the beginning. And now, one thing I would like to do is to summarize some of these lessons learned that we – some of the major takeaways from these various presentations.

And so, what are some of the common lessons learned? Right? We heard that it's key to establish relationships with federal, state, county, and local government agencies and response networks, and to do that in advance of a disaster. And does that also involve letting them know about farmworker's specific needs? So a lot of those needs may be that farmworkers live in rural areas, which may be more difficult to access.

They may have language barriers. They might live in temporary housing or migrant camps. They might my fearful to reach out for or receive services. And they may not receive emergency alerts. So those are things that are really important to let your partners know – you reach out to – whether it's federal, state, county, and local government agencies or other service providers. Right? And talk about those different specific needs of farmworkers.

And one common need for farmworkers following a disaster is employment due to the effects of disaster on agriculture. And then, they also need the wrap-around services. So to address this, NFJP grantees can provide services or refer farmworkers to partners. And that's another reason why it's so important to establish those partnerships early on.

It can be helpful to develop a systematic disaster preparedness plan. And do that as part of the agency's long-term strategic plan. When you do this, you might want to include contingencies for things like loss of communication, electricity, and transportation. And in some cases, it may make the most sense to transition your software and technology to cloud-based systems, if that's possible for you.

Some of the other common lessons learned were that mobile administration offices can be a helpful tool, should anything happen to your hub quarters. It's important to consider the safety and wellness of agency staff during a disaster too. I think that's something that we don't always think about. Right? And it's also important to use trauma informed care when addressing the needs of both staff and participants or customers.

So now, it is time to address your questions. We have just a little bit of time to do so and I want to make sure we can try and get to as many questions as possible. And we can start with – Albert and Brenda, there was a question for you about – are all related deaths being counted now?

MR. RIVERA: There's – well – there's not really. There's a lot of controversy on – how do you classify if it was a related death with the hurricane or not. For example, we still have communities – I think there's still 17,000 to 18,000 people that do not have electricity. And one of the issues about not having electricity is that when you have a person that's on a respirator or on another type of machine that needs electricity, these people are dying and – do you relate it with the hurricane because there's no electricity, or do you not?

So it all depends on the doctor that actually does the certificate. And there's a lot of people that still – that are not really understanding that number. They find it too low with how much devastation Puerto Rico received with the hurricane. So just to come up with the answer – is that the government still is not clear on how many deaths are related or unrelated with the hurricane. So we still don't have an actual number from the government.

BRENDA LEE SOTO COLON: At the beginning, they were saying that only 64 people died. But now, the have realized that its more than 1,000 people.

MS. SHANNON: Wow. Yeah. Thank you.

MR. RIVERA: We have a statistical problem there.

MS. SHANNON: Mm-hmm. And then there's a follow up question – what is the current rate of unemployment in Puerto Rico?

MR. RIVERA: Well, right now it's at 19.9 percent. But back in December it was a 10 point – give me one second – a 10.9. So it actually went down 9.9 percent, but then we have a lot of FEMA jobs. So FEMA has provided a lot of jobs right now, but once FEMA leaves, all those people that did have the FEMA jobs that weren't unemployed go back to being unemployed.

MS. SHANNON: OK. And then, because we're on that FEMA and (task ?) zone – conversation – related question is – was (task ?) assisted by FEMA or did Puerto Rico government outreach provide food?

MR. RIVERA: No. FEMA did not provide – no. We didn't receive assistance from FEMA for the food distribution or Puerto Rico. It was private entities like Fundacion Comunitaria and Unidos de Puerto Rico. They provided that grant opportunity.

MS. SHANNON: Thank you. Great. OK. Thank you. And this is a question for Norma. How long after DWP's money grant did it take to distribute to clients? Also, what type of training required for farmworkers to transition into construction work? What kind of training was provided?

MS. GARCIA: Actually, there was not a training – well actually, for the dislocated grant that we received, there's no experience required. The jobs that actually are labeled – to be able to place them – the jobs will be general labor. That's the only requirement. We work with the workers closely in order that any – actually, if there's any training that needs to be done or completed, we work with – actually with the worksites.

We provide (investment ?) – we provide a vendor in order to do the training – specific training that is necessary. Or, actually, the trainee themselves will do the training themselves. So we put them to (place ?) as soon as possible – as soon as we sign a contract with the work sites. And then, we find the individuals that can participate in the program, and we get them to work, and we actually provide the safety gear also that – whatever is necessary to make sure they do their jobs safely. So like I said there's no extra training required for the jobs that we put them into – into those programs to help and assist the (families ?) from the disasters.

MS. SHANNON: OK. Thank you. Question for Stacey. You mentioned MET decided not to be a donation location. Did you assist to get the clients the resources you referred them to – like to provide transportation? Transportation seems to be a big issue for people.

You may be on mute. You just want to click unmute. OK. Stacey, we will come back to you. Hopefully you can get back on the line if you got disconnected. And – oh, let's see. Yeah. She's going to call right back in. Let's see here – other questions.

So here's one question. I know many farmers were able to start growing again, but I'm sure many others still need help also. Do you see more workers requesting to come to the states to work for the season? Who would like to answer that question?

MR. RIVERA: Well, in the case of Puerto Rico, we have seen a high percentage of people that are leaving to work in the states with job offers from here on the island. Recruiters coming here to recruit different types of – areas of work, like nurses, doctors, teachers, farmworkers, landscapers, gardeners – I mean everything. And yeah, of course. Our farmworkers do need help – just to get their crops back.

MS. SHANNON: Mm-hmm. Thank you. And did any other presenters want to respond to that question as well?

OK. I see that Stacey – you are back. And so, the question for you is – you mentioned that MET decided not to be a donation location. Did you assist to get clients to the resources you referred them to, such as transportation?

MS. TAYLOR: Yes. So we did work very closely with our local community partners – law enforcement agencies, fire departments. And I think I talked briefly about it in the presentation that – for us it seemed to – we could do the most good if we could get our locations open. Our clients could come to us. We could sit down with the (IEP ?) and kind of look at what their needs are. And do some real case management on the front line. So we were able to do that, and then assess their needs and determine the referral system that needed to go into place.

So that was very successful because there were a lot – as I mentioned – of local churches and schools – other community partners – that received an influx of donations. So we were able to do that. Unfortunately, the 20 counties that were declared disaster areas for – met with the exception of Harris County proper – now northeast Harris County also is a part of MET service area and it was hit quite hard.

And all of those counties do not have public transportation. So transportation is a serious issue for us daily, and the hurricane just compounded that problem. The rural areas do not have regular bus routes, and if they do have a small bus, it would be maybe a school bus that was turned into a city bus. It might run one or two routes per day. It typically doesn't run in the evenings, nor does it run on the weekends.

A lot of these rural areas have services only one time per month – like the WIC office might open once a month, or the other services – the dentist – might come to town once a month. Or once every two weeks, a doctor. The local emergency room could be miles away. So the 20 counties that were impacted still struggle with transportation – struggled prior to the hurricane, and are continuing to struggle now.

So I hope that answers your question.

MS. SHANNON: Thank you. So I see that we are at the end of our time. I know we still had questions that we weren't able to address, so I want people to know that if there's a specific question that we can get to – any of our presenters – we can try to have them follow up with you specifically. We have a – we'll have their contact information just coming up shortly in the next slide.

For now, I just want to note that, as I mentioned at the beginning, this is part one of our two-part series on Disaster Preparedness and Response: Serving Farmworkers. We ask that you join us for part two on Thursday, May 31st at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Part two will focus on partnerships and resources. You'll hear from a state monitor advocate on what she observed and how she was able to work with partners to address the needs of farmworkers at the state level.

You will hear from representatives at the federal level regarding unemployment insurance, resources for farmworkers, and federal National Dislocated Worker Program. You'll also hear from the Wage & Hour division's district director in Puerto Rico. And you'll walk away from the webinar with some tangible next steps. So we hope that you will join us on May 31st. You can register for part two of the webinar through workforce GPF.

And, as I said, this is the contact information for our presenters. We have it located throughout three different slides here. If you download the presentation from WorkforceGPS, you'll be able to have access to all their contact information if you weren't able to catch it as I just scrolled through it there.

And I just really want to thank all of our presenters for taking the time and really explaining to us everything that you went through as an organization, how you were able to continue to try and provide services to farmworkers in your areas, and the lessons learned. That's really how we all learn. Right?

And we can take those different tidbits of information and apply them to our own organizations, and hopefully be able to serve farmworkers in a better way in the future. While we know that – we hope natural disasters won't affect us, it's always best to just be prepared. So thank you so much and thank you all – to everyone who was able to join us today.

(END)