

Farmworker Standards Board



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THE SHORT VERSION

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6 billion to our state's economy that lack basic protections.

For farmworkers, a standards board will create their first-ever voice in setting industry standards and correcting historic exclusions.

Background

Oregon's essential workers help communities thrive. When workers and employers unite to set industry standards, we create more stable, innovative, and equitable industries that benefit everyone.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6 billion to our state's economy. They lack basic protections and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

Worker Standards Boards

Cities and states across the country have proven that worker standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food and care we need.

For farmworkers, a standards board will create their first-ever voice in setting industry standards and correcting historic exclusions.

Workforce standards boards will:

- ✓ Give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards
- ✓ Set meaningful standards with real enforcement power and accountability
- ✓ Build stable workforces ready to meet growing needs
- ✓ Ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation

A History of Exclusion

For generations, farmworkers have been excluded from basic labor protections that other workers take for granted. Despite doing some of the most important work in our state, they have no formal way to improve their working conditions or ensure their voices are heard.

These challenges stem from decades of systemic exclusion. When Congress passed basic labor protections in 1938, farmworkers and domestic workers were deliberately left out. Today, low wages and inadequate protections persist and perpetuate cycles of poverty in the state. When we fail to value essential work, we all pay the price. Without changes, our economy and our families will continue to suffer from vital workforce shortages.

