

After the Harvest:

THE PLIGHT OF OLDER FARMWORKERS



A Report by the
Housing Assistance Council and the
National Task Force on Older Farmworkers for



American Association of Retired Persons

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Second Edition

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American Association of Retired Persons

Consumer Affairs

Program Coordination and Development Department

and the

AARP Minority Affairs Initiative

The American Association of Retired Persons is the nation's leading organization for people age 50 and over. It serves their needs and interests through legislative advocacy, research, informative programs, and community services provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country. The organization also offers members a wide range of special membership benefits, including Modern Maturity magazine and the monthly Bulletin.

The AARP Minority Affairs Initiative aims to improve the economic, social and physical well-being of the nation's older minorities by addressing issues that directly affect their quality of life. In particular, it seeks improved living conditions, better job opportunities, greater participation in public/private programs and agencies, and increased awareness of the status of minority elderly and of their many contributions to our nation.

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) is a national nonprofit corporation working to increase the availability of decent housing for rural low-income people. HAC pursues its goals through technical assistance, loans, research and information for public and private housing agencies.

The National Task Force on Older Farmworkers was established in 1988 to improve the living conditions of older farmworkers and their families. Members of the Task Force include active and retired farmworkers; representatives of farmworker, housing, rural, religious and aging organizations; and Congressional staff.

After the Harvest:

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Who are the elderly farmworkers?
Are they a tribe of nomads?
Or are they like the air and wind
that you feel and don't see?

The AARP Task Force for elderly farmworkers
knows who they are
and has found them living
in old run down houses
with no help from any one.

They are people who have worked
on farms picking vegetables and fruits,
laboring from sun-up until sun-down,
inhaling poison insecticide,
eating cold food with unclean hands.

Most of them retire when they are 45 or 50 years old
because of the hard work.

Most of them have no Social Security
or retirement benefits
and get little or no help
from the state or federal government.

There are no health or education or housing benefits
for them.

We look right at them
but we don't even see them.

They are asking, when is the government
going to recognize us
as human beings
who have given our all,
who were down on all fours
but who are now standing up
and demand to be counted?

*By Fred Applin, retired
farmworker and member
of the National Task Force
on Older Farmworkers*

Foreword

In 1984, AARP received a letter from a group of older volunteers in Naples, Florida. The letter requested technical assistance in developing a congregate housing facility for older farmworkers in the Naples area.

In responding to this request, AARP discovered that information on older farmworkers and their living conditions was scarce or nonexistent. For example, there are very few specialized housing projects for older farmworkers in the United States, and little or no published material about them is available. In addition, greater public awareness of the problems encountered by the workers in these projects and elsewhere is needed.

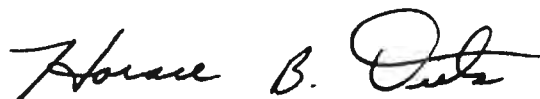
In an effort to assist older farmworkers, AARP and the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) initiated this project to:

- develop public awareness of the plight of older farmworkers;
- provide technical assistance to local groups which have the ability to develop housing projects for retired farm laborers; and
- recommend public and private activities to help alleviate the living conditions of older farmworkers.

This report examines the lives and housing of older hired agricultural workers, reviews proposed housing projects, and examines areas of the country where older farmworkers are most numerous. It also profiles the nation's only housing project designed exclusively for older farmworkers, and examines prototypes for similar projects in other parts of the country.

Following publication of the first edition of this report in 1987, AARP, HAC and other organizations formed the National Task Force on Older Farmworkers. The Task Force has attracted considerable media and Congressional attention to the plight of aging migrants, and has conducted research for this updated report. Today the Task Force continues to work for this needy population.

We hope this report will inspire you and your organization to become involved in efforts to improve the housing situation of older farmworkers.



Horace Deets

1.

Farmworkers, Rural Housing and the Elderly



***Farmworker's house:
Las Milpas, Texas, colonia.***

Hired agricultural workers, many of whom work seasonally and migrate hundreds or even thousands of miles, are among the most vulnerable groups in America. Many have little or no formal education, and most have little hope of escaping the cycle of poverty in which they are trapped. As a group, these workers consistently rank as the lowest-paid in the nation despite their frequent exposure to hazardous working conditions, pesticides and debilitating stoop labor. They often live in housing without indoor plumbing or other amenities that most Americans take for granted. Their living and health conditions are often so poor that average life expectancy is less than that for other occupational groups. A U.S. Department of Agriculture study was brutally frank about the plight of farmworkers in this country:

By virtually any objective economic measure, farmworkers as an occupational group fall below minimally-accepted labor force standards. Society identifies much farmwork as socially undesirable and farmworkers as a severely economically disadvantaged group of laborers whose conditions, as individuals and as an occupational group, tend to be self-perpetuating. The public is concerned about the lack of equity in farm labor legislation and regulation, heavy reliance on foreign workers, the problems of migratory workers, and other social ills related to agricultural employment.⁽¹⁾

The public is far less aware of, and therefore less concerned with, the special problems that confront older farmworkers. Unlike their younger counterparts who can still work an eight-hour day, many older farm laborers are unable to work at all. Most are economically impoverished, and many are ineligible for Social Security or federally-subsidized housing, and too frail to join their families during picking-season migrations. For these individuals, daily living is a struggle, and many have no idea where to turn for help.



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UNITED FARM WORKERS

***After the
grape harvest: Delano,
California.***

The problems faced by older farmworkers should be considered within the context of issues involving all older persons. The elderly (over-65) population in the United States is projected by the Census Bureau to grow from 20.0 million in 1970 to 35.0 million in 2000, a 75.0 percent increase. The country's total population is expected to grow by only 31.9 percent over the same period. The over-65 population between 1970 and 1988 grew from 19.5 million to 29.0 million, a jump of 48.7 percent.⁽²⁾ With increased longevity and an aging baby-boom group, the number of elderly citizens will continue to increase rapidly.

The 1985 Economic Report of the President notes that retirement planning

has become increasingly important for the nation as well as for families. The proportion of the population that is elderly ... will explode as the baby-boom generation retires. In 1900 one person in 25 was 65 years of age or older; today that proportion is one in eight; by 2030 one person in five will be elderly. In about 35 years the United States as a whole is ex-

pected to have the same proportion of elderly as Florida does today. In 50 years the ratio of people over 65 to the working-age population will be 2 1/2 times as great as it was in 1950. No other demographic change will influence the nation in the next 50 years as much as this "graying" of America. Every American and every facet of the society will be affected.⁽³⁾

This dramatic shift will obviously increase the need for services to the elderly. But in most states, few new nursing home beds are being provided because of moratoria on construction. Even before these moratoria, rural areas often had too few nursing home beds for those who truly needed nursing home care. Intermediate care facilities in rural America are even more scarce. And this scarcity, along with the fact that rural people are more likely than their urban counterparts to have health problems, has created a problem of crisis proportions.⁽⁴⁾

Rural areas also have large numbers of elderly persons who need appropriate and affordable housing. For example, in 1987 (the latest year for which full data are available), the poverty rate for the elderly was 11.1 percent in metropolitan areas, but 15.6 percent in non-metropolitan areas.⁽⁵⁾ Because of their poverty, many of these rural residents live in housing which is dilapidated and without basic amenities. For example, 22 percent of all elderly households are in non-metro areas, but 43 percent of elderly households living in substandard conditions are in non-metro places. Non-metro areas also have 65 percent of all elderly households with inadequate water supplies, 78 percent of the elderly with insufficient sewage disposal, and 53 percent of those with inadequate heating.

In metropolitan areas, the elderly are less likely than the non-elderly to live in substandard housing. But in non-metro America, the opposite is true: 13 percent of the elderly and 9 percent of the non-elderly lived in substandard housing in 1985.

Two thirds of all elderly who live alone own their homes. But those in rural areas live on farms, in trailers, up hollows, or down dirt roads where their problems are often hidden from view in a picturesque landscape.

In Appendix A, Table 1 shows the number and poverty rates of the elderly by race in 1987 for all areas and for non-metropolitan areas. These numbers show that white, black and Hispanic older persons are more likely to be impoverished if they live in non-metropolitan areas.

It's easy to dismiss these older persons. They're often portrayed as couples in rocking chairs on the porches of rural shacks -- a quaint cliché which will inevitably disappear with the passage of time. But, unlike the elderly in cities, they're often too isolated to meet with each other or to organize on their own behalf. More than half the rural elderly poor live alone, and many have no vehicle or telephone.⁽⁶⁾

Among these rural elderly, housing opportunities are largely limited to those who can move into or near town, closer to transportation, health, food services and other people. For those who can't move, rental and long-term care facilities are in short supply, and even when they are available, they're often the least desirable housing options. Many rural elderly have dilapidated homes, but they often own them "free and clear," and appear to be inextricably attached to their land.⁽⁷⁾

Eventually, however, fully-independent living becomes impossible for most. One alternative is senior housing with supportive services such as meal preparation, housekeeping, transportation and home health care. This alternative is often referred to as congregate housing.

Congregate housing includes sufficient services to enable many partially-impaired elderly persons to remain in non-institutional settings. These services include at least one prepared meal per day, served in a group setting; housekeeping and personal care services; and transportation. Some health care as well as social and recreational activities are provided by many congregate housing centers.

Congregate housing is particularly needed because of the lack of long-term alternatives in rural and non-metropolitan areas. Many present and potential residents of nursing homes in fact do not need the level of expensive, full-time health care that is provided in a nursing home setting.

The Federal Government Response

Many older people in rural areas need and (if it's available) will use housing rehabilitation assistance or move to congregate units in their home communities. One resource for this kind of assistance is the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, particularly the agency's Section 504 grant and loan program for home repair and its Section 515 rental program.

FmHA-sponsored congregate apartments: Kingsburg, California.



The FmHA Section 515 rental program provides newly constructed, affordable rental housing through the use of 50-year mortgages at 1 percent interest and a limited supply of rental assistance subsidies. The emphasis on new construction is due to the lack of suitable rural rental housing and the special design needs of the elderly.

Section 515 rural rental housing began in 1963 as a rental program for older persons. While the program's scope was later broadened to include families, it has maintained an elderly focus. FmHA officials have estimated that approximately 35 percent of the 330,000 housing units produced since 1963 have been for exclusive use by the elderly.

The FmHA also provides funds for farm labor housing. To be eligible to live in FmHA farm labor housing, tenants must receive a substantial portion of their incomes from farm labor and be U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens. A 1987 change in the law has made retired and disabled farmworkers eligible for FmHA farm labor housing, but active workers have priority for residency. This restriction has effectively made this housing inaccessible to most retired farmworkers.

Current FmHA policy emphasizes repairs as well as new construction. The 504 program provides loans and grants for home repair for very low-income (50 percent of area median income) persons. In fiscal year 1989, this program provided \$12.5 million in grants and \$11.3 million in loans.

A leading model for congregate housing is the demonstration project initiated jointly by FmHA and the Administration on Aging (AoA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1979. The project was designed to support small apartment complexes in rural areas which had inadequate housing for the elderly.⁽⁸⁾ Each of the ten projects sites was supported with \$1 million in FmHA Section 515 low-interest rental housing loan funds.

AoA provided funds for such supportive services as meals and transportation under the Model Projects authority of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

An evaluation of the AoA and FmHA project, conducted in 1983, found it to be successful. The evaluation determined that congregate housing services could be provided, in 1983, for an average annual cost of about \$2,500 per unit. Annual cost per unit for congregate services ranged from \$2,075 in Iowa to \$2,818 in New York. The cost per unit for land and construction ranged from \$25,800 to \$49,200. The evaluation concluded, among other findings, that:

- It is clearly possible to find credible developers who can and will join forces with agencies that serve older persons to build and successfully operate congregate housing in rural communities.....
- Congregate housing projects are meeting a need for housing services in their host communities.....

- Most current tenants are well-satisfied with congregate living.....
- None of the projects appeared... to have an "institutional atmosphere".....⁽⁹⁾

All of the original demonstration project sites are still functioning. In addition, a number of other rural congregate projects have been established with FmHA Section 515 loans. This ongoing expansion and the success of the original projects demonstrates that the congregate housing model is a viable option for some rural elderly.

2.

An Overview of Older Farmworkers



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UFW

*In the fields near
Oxnard, California*

Within the broader group of rural elderly, older farmworkers have special concerns and needs. But statistics on the size and status of this population, like data on farmworkers generally, are imperfect. In this report, we've surveyed the available information on this sub-population, recognizing that it has its limitations -- primarily the fact that most of the data sources apply to active workers.

Older farmworkers cannot be defined rigidly as age 65 and over. Given the shorter lifespans, harsh working conditions, and early retirement of many farmworkers, younger subgroups -- for example, 45 and over, and 55 and over -- are included in the discussion of older farmworkers in this report.

Annually between 1945 and 1977 and biannually until 1987, the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) published statistical reports on farmworkers drawn from the Census Bureau's annual Current Population Survey.⁽¹⁰⁾ Unfortunately these reports, called The Hired Farm Working Force (HFWF) for most of those 42 years, have been discontinued.

The 1987 report, The Agricultural Work Force (AWF), was the last in the series. It indicates that there are 2.463 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the United States. (Migrant farmworkers travel across state or county lines and stay away from home overnight to do agricultural work. Seasonal farmworkers labor in their home areas without staying away overnight.)

It's important to note that farmworker advocates believe the HFWF numbers may be a low estimate. A 1977 study for the Legal Services Corporation estimated 5.003 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the United States, twice the 1987 AWF figure.⁽¹¹⁾

In Appendix A, Tables 2 through 5 include the AWF data for 1987, which reveal a number of important facts. Older persons comprise a relatively large part of the total migrant farmworker population, particularly among minority farmworkers (especially blacks). Prior reports, for 1983 and earlier, show that women are also an important force among older farmworkers. Many older farmworkers work at least 40 hours a week in agricultural labor, and are more likely than

their younger counterparts to earn a substantial part of their income from agricultural labor.

The Agricultural Work Force Report shows the following:

- In 1987, there were 2,463,000 hired farmworkers. Eighteen percent were age 45 and older and 9 percent were at least 55. Of 2,595,000 hired farmworkers (migrant and seasonal) in 1983, 17 percent were age 45 or older and 9 percent were age 55 and older. (Table 2)
- Seventeen percent of white hired farmworkers, 19 percent of Hispanic hired farmworkers, and a substantial 23 percent of blacks and other hired farmworkers are age 45 or older. (Table 3) Figures show that 78 percent of farmworkers are white, though this estimate is disputed by farm labor experts as being too high.
- Thirty percent of hired farmworkers age 65 and older had less than 25 days of farmwork in 1987, but 22 percent of this same age group worked 250 days or more. (Table 4)
- Of all hired farmworkers age 45 and over, 44 percent worked 150 or days or more in 1987. Thirty-five percent of the farmworkers who were at least 65 in that year worked 150 days or more. (Table 4)
- Not surprisingly, younger farmworkers tend to have higher farm and nonfarm earnings. Those age 45-54 had total farm and nonfarm earnings of \$8,032 in 1987. But workers age 65 and over had total earnings of only \$4,522. Those who do farmwork only are worse off; even though working an average of 133 days in 1987, farm laborers age 65 and older had earnings of only \$3,227. At 45-54, those doing farmwork only earned \$6,538 and at age 55-64 the same workers earned \$4,771. (Table 5)
- Table 6 shows that younger Hispanics, whether they live in metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas, have much higher levels of education than their over-45 counterparts. Those with less education will probably have a more difficult time dealing with the problems of old age. They may be intimidated by government forms, checking accounts, hospital admission forms, credit applications and other types of paperwork. Intimidation may increase with advancing age.
- There is also extensive disability among farmworkers. A 1974 study for the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare found that 44.5 percent of the nation's farmworker households had at least one disabled member. Over 31



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UFW

'Older farmworkers are a mostly unseen part of the labor force . . .'

percent of the heads of farmworker households said their work capacity was limited because of a physical, mental or emotional disability. Household heads in the United States as a whole have a disability rate of 10.6 percent.⁽¹²⁾

Housing Assistance Council Older Farmworker Survey

In addition to the statistical review drawn from The Agricultural-Work Force, the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) conducted its own survey of state farmworker organizations. (See Bibliography). Interviews with housing or other experts representing organizations in 25 states, completed in December 1985, revealed some important facts:⁽¹³⁾

- None of the states surveyed has a housing project specifically for older farmworkers.
- In a majority of the states surveyed, there are housing projects that house older farmworkers and other older persons who have worked in a variety of occupations.

- In nearly 80 percent of the states surveyed, farmworker activists interviewed felt that the condition of older and retired farmworkers' housing is poor or very poor. In the remaining 20 percent of the states, older farmworkers' housing was perceived to be in fair condition. In no state was this housing stock felt to be in good, very good or excellent condition.
- Among the states surveyed, an unweighted average of 84 percent of elderly farmworkers earn less than \$7,500 in annual income; 67 percent earn less than \$5,500 annually.
- An unweighted average of 67 percent of elderly farmworkers are male; 33 percent are female.
- Most older farmworkers are renters or live with other family members who rent. However, ownership is more prevalent in some states -- Oklahoma and Iowa, for example. According to respondents in Texas, over half that state's older farmworkers own their homes.
- Most often, retired farmworkers live with an adult child's family. Very few are in long-term care facilities. And the remainder live alone or with their spouses.
- Survey respondents were also asked to identify types of income and other support received by older farmworkers. The results are shown in Table 7. Food stamps are an important source of support for this group in many states. Forty-four percent of the respondents reported that all or almost all older farmworkers receive food stamps. But in 61 percent of the states, almost none or none of the older farmworkers live in subsidized housing. Forty-six percent of the respondents indicated almost none or none have earnings from employment other than farmwork.
- Table 8 shows that older farmworkers often have specific kinds of health problems. For example, 34 percent of the respondents noted that over half the older farmworkers have heart or circulatory problems. Fifty-three percent of the respondents reported that half or more of the older farmworkers have bone, joint or muscular problems. And nearly half the respondents indicated 50 percent or more of the older farmworkers have health problems resulting from exposure to pesticides.

U.S. Bureau of the Census Data

HAC also analyzed housing and demographic data collected by the Bureau of the Census for older farmworkers in several key states. The California Human Development Corporation (CHDC) provided data extracted from the 1980 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

Appendix Tables 9 to 17 show major findings from this data for the nation and for three important farm labor states -- California, Florida and Texas. The numbers are roughly parallel to the USDA AWF results, although that study does not include any information on a state-by-state basis. Both studies show that California and Texas farmworkers are mostly Hispanic, and in Texas many workers migrate north to follow the harvests. Florida farmworkers are more likely to be black.

Table 9 shows that there were 240,000 hired farmworkers age 55 and older in the United States in 1980. (The USDA study reported 215,000 in this age group in 1987.) Of the total, 165,000 were white, 33,000 black, 25,000 Hispanic, and 10,000 of other races. In the 55-and-over age group, California alone had almost 37,000 farmworkers, Florida over 16,000 and Texas 21,000. (Tables 10 to 12)

Nationally, relatively large numbers of black farmworkers are likely to live in housing with inadequate plumbing facilities. Almost 34 percent of black farmworkers over age 65 and nearly 29 percent of black farmworkers between 55 and 64 live in units with incomplete plumbing. (Table 13) In Texas and Florida, and to a lesser extent in California, both blacks and Hispanics often live in housing without plumbing. (Tables 14-16) These are the conditions of the permanent homes of older farmworkers, rather than the temporary housing they might occupy while in the migrant labor stream. The temporary housing is usually worse in terms of overcrowding, lack of complete plumbing and other problems.

Educational levels are often quite low for older farmworkers. Table 17 shows that four of five Hispanic farmworkers age 55 and over have



Housing in rural colonias: 14 people live in this house.

less than eight years of schooling. Fewer than one in ten of this group is a high school graduate. Elderly black farmworkers are almost as poorly prepared. Four of five such workers age 65 and older have less than eight years of education.

The CHDC data also show that language is frequently a barrier for older Hispanic farmworkers. Over 53 percent of Hispanic farmworkers age 55 to 64 speak English poorly or not at all. Of Hispanic farmworkers age 65 and older, 56 percent speak English poorly or not at all.

Unfortunately, older farmworkers are a mostly unseen part of the labor force when they are active workers. And once retired, this group of mostly low-income persons may slip even further from public view, particularly if they have no support from family members and are ineligible for public assistance. Poverty, housing deficiencies, poor health and other problems clearly mark this group as a population at greater risk than nearly any other segment of society.



Many elderly are valued family members and want to live with their families.

VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UFW

3.

A Case Study of Older Farmworkers in South Texas



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UFW

***Near Lamont,
California.***

To shed light on the status and housing of older farmworkers, the Housing Assistance Council conducted a brief case study of conditions in south Texas. This area, the Rio Grande Valley, is the home base for most migrant farmworkers in Texas. In terms of poverty and unemployment, it is also one of the nation's most depressed regions. For example, for years the McAllen-Edinburg metro area in Texas has had one of the nation's highest unemployment rates (McAllen is the valley's principal city). Of 86 U.S. counties with poverty rates of 33.3 percent or higher in 1980, 12 are in south Texas. Starr, one of the 12, is the nation's second poorest county, with a poverty rate of 50.6 percent. The Valley also has the only two urban counties (i.e., within Metropolitan Statistical Areas) with 1980 poverty rates of 30.0 percent or higher. They are Cameron and Hidalgo, two of the four counties featured in this case study.⁽¹⁴⁾

In the southernmost Rio Grande Valley many older or retired farmworkers live in substandard housing (i.e., units that are overcrowded or without complete plumbing) -- with families or alone -- as homeowners. Many are ineligible for benefit programs such as Social Security and Supplemental Security Income. They are often isolated, without transportation or telephone. Census data show there are at least 10,000 elderly (65 and over) or retired farmworkers in the southernmost four-county area bordering Mexico, 4,000 of whom live alone.

The rental housing programs in the area bypass the elderly farmworker (though it is not known how many of these farmworkers are actually homeowners). Some farmworkers will not leave the home and land they own because those assets represent security. And many do not qualify for either HUD Section 202 housing or FmHA farm labor housing in the area because of their very low incomes and/or status as aliens.

Weatherization programs do not offer assistance on a scale large enough to have a significant impact on elderly farmworkers.

The Rio Grande Valley is the entry area and subsequent home base for many Mexicans and Central Americans who immigrate to the United States. In the four counties on the US-Mexico border, most of the population is primarily Spanish-speaking, and most of the foreign-born population is comprised of recent immigrants from Mexico (see Table 18). There are no reliable figures on the number who become farmworkers, but area residents say that most of the rural settlers in the region work or have worked in the fields on a migrant or seasonal basis.

According to Texas Rural Legal Aid, nearly all the migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Texas are Hispanic. Almost one-half reside in the Rio Grande Valley, and almost 80 percent of these individuals have annual incomes far below the poverty level.⁽¹⁵⁾

Most south Texas farmworkers live in colonias, which are the rural equivalent of urban barrios (Hispanic neighborhoods). Colonias are usually overcrowded settlements occupied by Mexican-Americans. They seldom have sewage facilities, a clean water supply, electricity or paved streets. They are often in flood-prone areas and rely for waste disposal on septic tanks, which are likely to contaminate any wells on the lots because the clay soil does not "perk" (drain). Instead, it cracks, and the cracks may conduct waste to the water supply.

Colonias spring up as private developers buy, grade and subdivide large tracts of land, then sell lots (generally from 2,500 to about 5,000 square feet) for about \$7,000 to \$20,000 each, with short-term financing at high interest rates. The staff of Colonias del Valle, a south Texas anti-poverty organization, estimated that the private developer reaps a 60 percent profit from a colonia. The profitability of colonias is evident from their rapid proliferation: one interviewee calculated that the number of colonias in the Lower Rio Grande Valley had increased since 1968 from 60 to 136, with 50 to 200 homes in each. With the sale of lots, the developer's responsibility ends. The absence of building codes outside the cities is apparent from the ensuing variety of self-constructed dwelling types, shapes and colors, and from the obvious lack of amenities.

***Progress in a colonia:
Owner had 'gone North'
to find work and
was able to make
some improvements.***



Most colonias have dirt or clay roads and overcrowded lots, with tiny, dilapidated dwellings and adjacent outhouses. Often, one-room dwellings are inhabited by large families. Some are not insulated and poorly caulked. Non-weather-resistant indoor paint is often used on their exteriors.

Water must be hauled from nearby cities or from irrigation ditches that are often contaminated with pesticides. In the one colonia in which an FmHA-financed water supply project was installed, HAC staff visited a family of six whose shower was outside next to the outhouse, and who complained that they had to pay \$400 for a hook-up to the local water system. (Others reported higher fees of up to \$500). Such costs are prohibitive for most individual colonia households, and it is not uncommon for several homes to be connected through water hoses to one meter.

Data on conditions in the colonias are difficult to obtain, but there are some estimates. According to the United Farm Workers, 41 percent of farmworker homes in the colonias have no indoor toilets, and 20 percent have no direct access to safe drinking water. According to Colonias del Valle, which operates a weatherization program for the poor, 70 percent of colonia homes are eligible for weatherization assistance because of the low incomes of their occupants. The weatherization program in 1985 had applications from 650 households, of which 180 were actually assisted.

Progress is conspicuous for some families, particularly among those with members who have "gone north" for employment. Households have added rooms or entirely new houses as their incomes grew. Consequently, their lots often contain a series of brightly colored units, increasing in size and amenities. Such signs of improved incomes did not, however, bring the communities up to acceptable standards, and are not evident among the homes of the elderly who live alone.

The Older Farmworker Population of South Texas

It's difficult to obtain reliable information on the farmworker population as a whole, but it's even more difficult to determine the number of farmworkers who are now retired or elderly, in order to assess their housing needs. Estimates have been made based on interviews with persons familiar with the area. Tables 19 and 20 show that most of the area's elderly residents and even larger proportions of the elderly poor (including those who live alone) are primarily of Spanish origin. Interviewers were told that at least half of the area's elderly residents would have past or current employment in agriculture, and that the proportion would rise for those who are poor or of Spanish origin. It is noteworthy that, especially for the population of Spanish origin, the poverty rate increases with age. Table 19 shows

that 43 to 54 percent of the elderly of Spanish origin over the age of 65 are poor.*

It's clear that a concentration of older farmworkers live in the four counties concerned, and that they are likely to overlap the 10,000 elderly poor of Spanish origin. It's also likely that most live in the inadequate housing prevalent in the colonias. There are some elderly housing projects in the area, but older farmworkers are generally excluded from these because of their lack of Social Security documentation. Moreover, Census poverty statistics do not include those elderly living in nursing, convalescent, or rest homes for the aged in other institutions which might offer adequate shelter.

Table 21 provides some indicators of living conditions for elderly households of Spanish origin. Most own their homes, but a relatively high proportion lack telephones, vehicles, plumbing, kitchen facilities, and other standard housing features. This table does not include the living conditions of the many elderly of Spanish origin who live with their families and are no longer counted by the census as heads of households. Since Table 21 includes the elderly of all income levels, it also may not reflect the housing needs of the poorest elderly -- those most likely to be farmworkers.

It is not known how many of the area's elderly live alone, but one measure of isolation may be the census figures on "unrelated individuals." The 1980 Census reported more than 4,000 elderly unrelated individuals (i.e. single persons) of Spanish origin, age 65 or older, with incomes below the poverty level in the four-county area of the valley (see Table 20). The poverty rate for unrelated individuals increases sharply with age and Spanish origin; ultimately, more than three-fourths of single elderly persons of Spanish origin are poor.

Interviews with staff of the United Farm Workers Union, the Texas Farm Workers Union, and two community-based nonprofit organizations, Colonias Del Valle and Amigos Del Valle tended to support census data. These groups pointed out uninsulated, self-constructed housing which older farmworkers own. The majority of these workers live with family members, although a significant number live alone. They are generally unable to obtain much or any Social Security due to their lack of documented employment. One farmworker advocate described her father, who had worked from age

*In using these figures, the limitations of the sample used in this report should be kept in mind. The year the census was taken (1980), the small area involved, and the known census undercount of Spanish-origin households are mitigating factors. Poverty, population size, and the number of colonias in the region have all increased since 1979, the year for which 1980 census poverty statistics were gathered. However, the four-county border area chosen for analysis probably offers the best population base for estimating numbers of farmworkers in the entire Rio Grande Valley.



***Colonia Charro,
in Texas:
The floor is
dirt; there
is no plumbing
or electricity.***

12 to 65 in the fields and now at age 67 receives \$225 a month in SSI. He also receives \$10 a month in food stamps. This low level of assistance means that he must still work, driving a tractor.

Most older farmworkers reportedly want to live near or with their families, and would rather receive rehabilitation and modification assistance to improve their homes than move into a rental project.

Mr. C, a deaf and retired 59-year-old farmworker, lives in a one-room shack in Colonia Charro neighborhood, and is not eligible for Social Security or SSI benefits. His wife has left him, and is living with his children in Florida. He has worked in the United States for ten years, but has lived in this Colonia for only five months.

Mr. C's home is, at most, 90 square feet. The floor is dirt; the roof and walls have gaps that expose the inside to the weather. He has no plumbing or electricity, but he has an outhouse and gets water from a neighbor's hose. He burns wood in a small stove for heat. He receives \$60 a month in food stamps, which provides him one meal a day.

Mr. C paid \$6,000 for his lot in 1981 and is unwilling to move unless he can sell it for that much. He is very anxious about surviving the winter months.

There are hundreds of similar cases in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Wil- lacy Counties. Mr. C may be eligible for FmHA Section 504 assis- tance (home repair for low-income persons) as his deafness would give him priority for loan assistance.

Health Problems of Older Farmworkers

According to a study by the University of Texas Medical Branch (Galveston), the incidence of influenza and pneumonia, tuberculosis, strep throat, hepatitis, and scarlet fever is much higher among farmworkers than among other Texas residents. The United Farmworkers Union reports that in 1985 there were 225 Mexican- American leprosy patients along the Gulf Coast and the Lower Rio Grande Valley. A 1979 study found that another 300 Mexican- Americans are privately treated at health clinics in the Rio Grande Valley, often for leprosy.

The Catholic Valley Home Health Agency confirms the relatively high incidence of housing-related health problems, such as tuber- culosis, which is attributed to considerable crossing back and forth across the border. The Agency also reports a relatively high in- cidence of respiratory and communicable diseases, particularly in winter; and diarrhea and dysentery, occurring most in areas where outdoor toilets are used. Other notable health problems, not neces- sarily housing-related, are relatively high incidences of heart disease and diabetes.

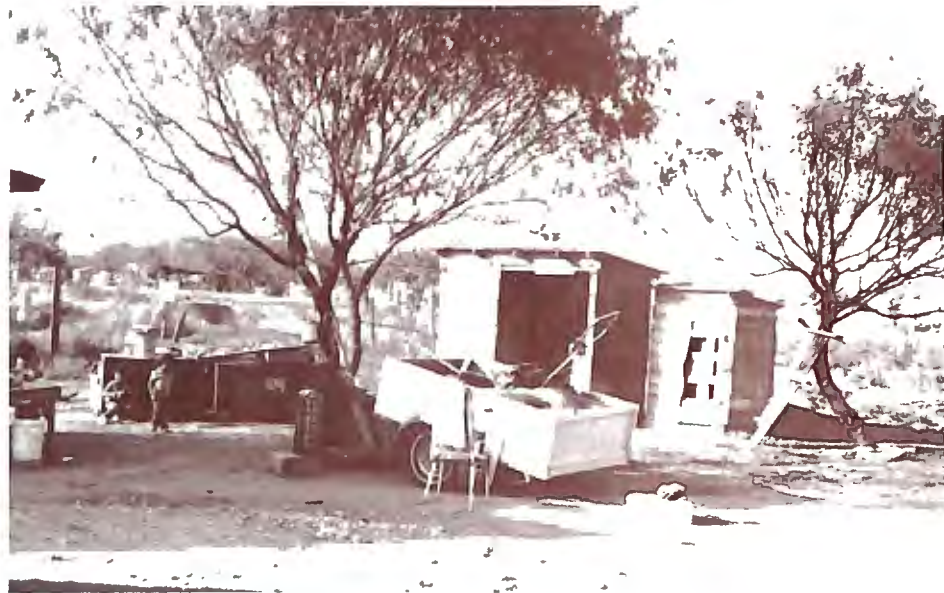
The lack of medical care is a major problem. Older farmworkers have few resources for transportation, are generally far from city ser- vices, and have no health insurance. They lack the documentation needed for eligibility for Medicare or Medicaid. Although some agencies will take patients who cannot afford to pay and who have no documentation, few find their way to a home health agency. Many older farmworkers live alone, are unaware of this resource, and do not go to a doctor who might refer them to the agency until, in one staff persons word's, "They're half dead." As the figures in Table 21 show, many do not have a vehicle or telephone and may be depend- ent upon a neighbor or friend to drive them to the doctor.

Needed: Homeowner Aid

A number of interviewees in South Texas suggested that the most appropriate approach to elderly farmworker needs would be rehabilitation or new construction assistance for homeowners, rather than rental housing assistance. Two reasons were given:

- Reportedly, Texas farmworkers, unlike farmworkers in Florida and California, generally own their homes. They are attached to the land, which provides them with some security, freedom, equity, and supplemental resources, such as gardens.
- The extended family dominates the culture. Most elderly are valued family members and want to live with their families, even in deplorable housing conditions. HAC staff saw much evidence confirming these circumstances, including many detached units provided for grandparents on their children's land.

On the other hand, Amigos del Valle reports that demand is high for units in elderly rental projects. It is unclear if these units are sought by colonias residents or other farmworkers, but they are undoubtedly sheltering elderly. It is likely that Amigos del Valle and other agencies in the area will continue to operate elderly rental housing projects. At least some rental units already exist; this may be an additional reason to emphasize homeownership assistance, which aside from minimal weatherization resources, is virtually absent from the area.



Homeownership assistance in making repairs to houses like this one is virtually absent from many areas.

4.

Housing of Older Farmworkers: Models of Existing and Planned Projects



***Agbiyani Center:
Delano, California.***

As discussed earlier, there is relatively little housing designed and operated specifically for older farmworkers, and only a few projects are currently being planned. Most of these projects are located in (or planned for) agricultural areas in Florida, California, and Texas. The profiles here are the work of the National Task Force on Older Farmworkers and HAC.

California: UFW

The Paulo Agbiyani Retirement Center, located two miles outside Delano, in Kern County, California, is reportedly the oldest and perhaps still the only retired farmworker housing project in the nation. It was constructed by the United Farm Workers Union (UFW) in 1974 and 1975 for single Filipino men who are retired farmworkers. Typically, these men came to the United States (without families) from the Philippines several decades ago. Many worked in the fields, never married and are now without family support structures during their later years.

Paulo Agbiyani was an elderly Filipino farmworker and early UFW supporter. While walking a union picket line in the 1960s, Abgiyani suffered a heart attack. He was turned away from the local Delano hospital, in keeping with that institution's policy of not admitting Hispanics and Filipinos. Desperately ill, Agbiyani died enroute to another hospital in more distant Bakersfield. The housing facility was named in his honor.

The Agbiyani Center is part of the UFW's "Forty Acres" complex, which includes several other UFW buildings, among them a regional union office and a defunct health clinic. As of September 1990, less than half the rooms were occupied. The residents were single men

and one couple. The UFW is actively trying to fill the remaining rooms.

The project has 58 single rooms; all of them have approximately 225 square feet of floor space. The first two feet of the 16-foot room depth provide closet and entrance hall space, so that the actual room dimension is 14 feet x 14 feet. Every two rooms share a large bath. At one end of the bathroom is a large, built-in locker or closet for additional storage. Each room is furnished with a bed, desk, chairs and dresser, but many residents have provided their own furniture. Each room opens onto both an interior hall and an exterior courtyard. The rooms are small but cozy, attractive and well maintained.

The project is laid out in a large "U", with kitchen, dining room, office and community rooms in the center. Bedrooms radiate from the center at the bottom of the "U". Both common and private spaces face onto an attractive central courtyard filled with plants and trees. Outside the "U" are extensive individual garden plots and chicken coops.

The project charges its residents \$250 a month -- \$100 for meals and \$150 for room rent. Comparable local rents are \$300 and up for room only. Most residents receive Social Security benefits and/or Supplemental Security Income, but few have any other sources of financial support. The average income for residents is approximately \$565 a month.



The United Farm Workers Union constructed the Agbiyani Center, 'perhaps the only retired farmworker housing project in the nation.'

The center offers three meals a day, seven days a week. There is no transportation service, but an inexpensive taxi is available and several residents have private automobiles. For special trips involving several residents, the center often hires a van. The dining room and the main communal room adjoin each other through a large, open threshold. Both are pleasant, comfortable and decorated with memorabilia. The center's office is next to the communal room. Meal service is cafeteria style, and everyone is responsible for clearing, scraping and sorting his or her own dishes, utensils and food scraps.

Most of the center's residents, who range in age from 63 to 88, came to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s seeking work. A pre-World War II California law forbade Asian marriages to non-Asians, so most of the Filipino workers who live at the center were left without family resources at retirement, although one tenant has a family in Delano, and several married, despite the state's miscegenation statute.

The center's manager, like most UFW professional workers, is a volunteer, although she receives a small living allowance from the union. The three-person kitchen staff is paid.

The building cost just over \$260,000 to construct in the mid-1970s. Most of this expenditure was for materials. Volunteers, including many from trade unions, provided most of the labor, planning and design for the project. Funding came from internal UFW loans, particularly from a loan made by the Union's Farmworker Fund to the Service Center, the UFW's property management division.

Most residents seem glad to be a part of the center. When asked where they might be living if the center didn't exist, most said their circumstances would be greatly reduced.

Contact: Mike Gonzalez, UFW, P.O. Box 62, Keene, CA 93531.

Texas: Casa de Amigos

Casa de Amigos houses the largest contingency of older farmworkers identified by the Older Farmworker Task Force. The five facilities that together comprise Casa de Amigos are located in five different towns in the Valley of the Rio Grande River in South Texas. The Rio Grande Valley is one of the state's most fertile agricultural areas and the permanent home to a large number of Texas farmworkers. The five facilities, which are HUD Section 202-financed and together contain 315 units, house primarily older farmworkers because most of area's low-income older population spent their employment years in agriculture. The sponsor's director, Amancio Chapa, estimates 35 to 45 percent of residents are older farmworkers.

One project, called Casa de Amigos #2, has 72 apartments, a community building, an office and a non-rental unit for a staff member.

Of the 72 units, six have two bedrooms (789 square feet) and 66 have one bedroom (613 square feet). Eight of the one bedroom units are for the physically handicapped. The project was initially occupied in 1982 and has a 100 percent occupancy rate with a waiting list. Per unit cost of construction was \$29,130. Contract rents are \$433 for one bedroom units and \$517 for two bedroom units; utility allowances are \$35 and \$46, respectively. The tenant's subsidized monthly average rent for both one and two bedroom units is \$56.

Although the housing director stated that 86 percent of the residents were of Spanish origin, he estimated that no more than half of these would have been farmworkers, because, "in the age bracket concerned, most wouldn't have Social Security," and would not qualify as tenants. So, at most, 110-120 of Amigo's Section 202 units are occupied by former farmworkers.

A study conducted before the State of Texas passed its Omnibus Hunger Act survey determined that one-third of those who received meals from a nutrition program operated by Amigos del Valle obtained their only meal of the day here. Meals are provided at senior activity centers located in the housing facilities. Ten to 12 percent of the residents of Casa de Amigos have extremely low or no income according to Chapa, evidenced by the fact that they qualify to pay zero rent in the rent subsidized facilities.

Casa de Amigos has such a long waiting list that other HUD-financed senior housing providers in the region sometimes access the list to recruit new tenants. All of the five facilities are one-story structures, which the area's older population prefers. Each of the units has a small front yard. During its development, the sponsor aggressively recruited minority contractors to build the apartments.

Support services provided to Casa de Amigos residents include transportation to shopping and medical care; information and referral for Food Stamps, commodities programs and Social Security; and recreational opportunities developed by each facility's tenant services council.

Contact: Amancio Chapa, Amigos del Valle, P.O. Drawer 3838, McAllen, TX 78502.

Florida: CCCC

The Concerned Citizens of Collier County (CCCC), a nonprofit community-service organization in southern Florida, has been working for several years to develop a 24-unit congregate facility for elderly persons who are retired from farmwork. CCCC has received a donated 40-acre tract in Imokalee, Florida, which will be used for the congregate project and several other related efforts. CCCC secured Community Development Block Grant funding for the site's roads, sewer, and water. Construction funding of \$600,000 is from private



Farmworker housing near Imokalee, Florida: focus of the Concerned Citizens of Collier County.

donations and state "Pocket of Poverty" money. Tenants will be poor farmworkers age 50 and over.

Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit self-help organization, will construct houses for moderate- and low-income persons on 44 lots of the tract. Eighty units of housing for active farmworkers will occupy a neighboring site.

Contact: Bea Harper, CCC, P.O. Box 8056, Naples, FL 33941.

Florida: NOAH

A total of 48 older farmworkers live in the South Bay and Covenant Villas, located in the farming town of Belle Glade, Florida. The project's developer, NOAH Development Corporation, set aside 20 percent of the facilities' units for low-income elderly residents. Because farm employment is prevalent in Belle Glade, almost all elderly residents have a background in agricultural work. John Brown, the corporation's director, estimates 80 percent of the residents are farmworkers or ex-farmworkers. The 64 units of South Bay Villas and Covenant Villas, containing 144 units, are financed with long-term loans from a private insurance company and Palm Beach County's Department of Housing and Community Development.

Contact: John Brown, NOAH Development, P.O. Box 13, Belle Glade, FL 33430.

Texas: A Union Plan

The Texas Farmworkers Union (TFU) has for several years been developing plans to sponsor one or more retirement communities. The union is interested in developing housing for older farmworkers on union-owned land in Harlingen and on land between McAllen and Pharr. It hopes to build small duplex units, each with a bedroom, bath and living room/kitchen, that would be affordable to retired farmworkers. Because union members will undertake construction, with subcontracts for only the electrical work, the only costs incurred will be for site improvements and construction.

A local bank has indicated to TFU an interest in providing permanent financing on favorable terms for the TFU project. HAC has indicated to TFU that construction financing might be available from HAC loan funds. TFU plans to apply for a loan to be considered by HAC's Loan Committee.

TFU calculates that it can build six duplexes (12 units) for a total cost of only \$69,000 (or \$5,750 per unit). The local bank is tentatively prepared to lend this amount at ten percent interest for 15 years, yielding a monthly payment of \$62 per unit. At 12 percent interest for 15 years, monthly payments would be \$69. TFU estimates that total housing costs, including utilities, would be \$100 to \$125 per month. No services such as meals or housekeeping are planned.

TFU also plans to reduce the cost of this housing by using the volunteer time of the residents. They propose to require each resident to contribute approximately ten hours per month to answer telephones

Costs of retirement housing can be reduced by using volunteer time of the residents in performing maintenance and repairs.



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF UFW

and do other light office tasks for the union. Experienced union members would be on call to help with maintenance problems and repair of the project. In addition, a small amount of each tenant's monthly rent payment would go into a pool for future electrical or other work union members could not perform.

One of TFU's spin-off organizations, Salud y Educacion por el Campesino de Texas, Inc., has produced a planning document calling for "a rural, energy-efficient, rental, self-reliant retirement community" in the Rio Grande Valley. According to this report,

The retirement community will attempt to accommodate 20-40 aged adults with incomes below poverty level, whose work background and cultural consciousness warrant a communal design with energy conserving accommodations.

[The] main objective in the design of this retirement community is to give the elderly farmworker the possibility of having decent housing and a room for their grandchildren, so that they can provide care for them, temporarily, while the parents are working...⁽¹⁷⁾

The unusual concept of providing an additional room for visiting grandchildren is based on TFU's sensitivity to farmworker traditions.

Contact: Alfredo de Alvila, Center for Third World Organizing, 3861 Martin Luther King Way, Oakland, CA 94609

Louisiana: Retired Women

Another approach is the Partnership in Ownership program, involving primarily retired women farmworkers who are owners of homes that are badly in need of repair. The women, along with other elderly and minority participants, play principal self-help roles in the rehabilitation of their homes, increasing their skills and confidence while lowering the costs of repair to an affordable amount. The program is primarily financed by private funds. Some homeowners also qualify for small FmHA loans.

Southern Mutual Help Association (SMHA), is a nonprofit organization based in New Iberia, Louisiana, in the heart of sugarcane country. For the last 20 years, the organization's ongoing mission has been to try and fill the gap between severe community needs and dwindling resources to address the needs.

Years ago, very few of the farmworker families in the region built or owned their own homes. In those days, the sugarcane industry was less mechanized, families stayed on company land, lived in company houses, and bought company goods. Now that unemployment has replaced plantation-style employment, the displaced workers and

their families subsist only on very low fixed incomes, without the benefit of savings.

"We have experienced the extreme needs as well as the difficulties farmworkers, especially the elderly ones, have in getting and keeping decent housing," states Sister Anne Catherine Bizalio, Executive Director of SMHA. The Partnership in Ownership program of SMHA helps older women who are retired farmworkers repair their desperately inadequate shack-like structures. SMHA's rehabilitation program is based on the premise that the best way to improve area residents' living conditions is to give them a principal role in the repair work, and to increase their skills and confidence along the way.

Materials are often purchased by the homeowners with loans from local banks or loan and grant funds available through the FmHA Section 502 and 504 housing rehabilitation programs. Since participants have limited repayment ability, SMHA uses creative approaches to leverage additional money for its housing work. Frequently, community assistance comes in the form of low-interest loans from non-profit and religious groups such as the Adrian Dominican Sisters and the McAuley Institute. Grants are solicited from foundations. Good cooking and assistance comes from neighbors.

Contact: Sr. Anne Catherine Bizalio, Southern Mutual Help, 5002 Old Jeanerette Road, New Iberia, LA 70560

California: Cabrillo Village

The Cabrillo Cooperative Housing Corporation is a success story of farmworkers gaining control over housing owned by lemon growers who decided to demolish the units rather than comply with state health and safety rules. In 1975, assisted by the United Farm Workers Union, some workers decided to buy units rather than permit their destruction or accept a \$500 relocation offer. The camp for migrant laborers was initially established by growers in 1937. Workers were able to save 82 units and build 74 new units financed by FmHA and built in two stages, the first 35 in 1977 and another 39 in 1986.

Fifteen years later, at least half of 161 households consist of older farmworkers. Many have aged in place in Cabrillo Village. Many still work in the fields. More than housing, the village contains a non-profit food cooperative, a chapel, a community center, clinic, and a meat market. Assistance in obtaining social services, English translation, and tenant services are available through the cooperative. The development resembles a small town and possesses a community spirit.

The new housing design won recognition in the 1988 Architectural Record, although FmHA thought the design looked too expensive. An architectural review described the project as looking expensive,

like middle-income housing, even though built well within the FmHA's budget.

Two, three, and four-bedroom row houses are grouped around a common green space. Private and public space is balanced and regional architectural traditions are reflected. Each unit has a subtle color difference to distinguish its individuality.

The newer 74 units were constructed using FmHA Section 514/516 farm labor housing financing. Purchase and rehabilitation of the 82 units was achieved through resources and help from a variety of sources, including State of California Department of Housing and Community Development, Ventura County Community Economic Development Association, Community Development Block Grant funds, and individual cooperative members.

Contact: Angeles Rodriquez, Cabrillo Cooperative Housing, 1515 S. Saticoy Avenue, Ventura, CA 93004.

Other Projects

Michigan

Seven of the 24 units at Chapita Hills, sponsored by Michigan Economics for Human Development, are occupied by older farmworkers. Community acceptance of the housing complex has come very slowly to Shelby, Michigan. When the facility was proposed, community leaders filed an injunction to halt its development, fearing it would devalue surrounding property. In contrast, Chapita Hills has developed into a well-operated FmHA-financed facility. Much hard work has been placed into soothing the community's reluctance to include farmworker housing as part of their town.

Contact: Manuel Garcia, Michigan Economics for Human Development, 3186 Pine Tree Road, Lansing, MI 48911.

Idaho

The Idaho Migrant Council's "El Milagro" Housing Facility serves a mix of low-income and farmworker households. Five of the households include older farmworkers and more are expected to be residents as additional units are repaired and brought into service. The facility was in poor condition when it was purchased from growers by the Idaho Migrant Council. Rehabilitation is occurring in phases as resources are available. Additional units are brought into service after repairs are complete. The facility operates free of public funds, program restrictions and subsidies. Even without subsidies, however, the IMC has been able to serve very low-income groups.

Contact: Tim Lopez, Idaho Migrant Council, P.O. Box 490, Caldwell, ID 83606-0490.

Arizona

Bright colored walls with painted southwestern motifs make the HUD Section 202 elderly housing in Benson, Arizona attractive and distinct. The facility is located near a heavily traveled agricultural work route and many of the residents living in the 31 units are retired farmworkers. The facility opened its doors in the fall of 1988 after a four-year process of obtaining funding approval, appeasing community opposition, and constructing the buildings.

Contact: John Sigala, Portable Practical Educational Prep., 806 E. 46th Street, Tucson, AZ 85713.

Results of the Task Force Survey

In 1988 the Older Farmworker Task Force set out to find examples of housing for older farmworkers. There are some housing success stories. The profiles of housing facilities included within this publication are a tribute to the organizations who have developed them in spite of tremendous obstacles. The profiles are included here to serve as a networking tool, a documentation of successes and failures, and a compilation of design and financing schemes.

Perhaps what is most clearly demonstrated through the profiles, however, is the lack of resources directed toward older and retired farmworkers. With few exceptions, most housing developments which serve older farmworkers appear to serve this group purely incidentally, almost, in fact, accidentally. Together the facilities listed provide decent, safe, affordable housing for only a few hundred older and retired farmworkers -- a far cry from the thousands of such workers who lack the resources to obtain decent shelter without help.

The Task Force mailed housing surveys to 197 rural agencies in the summer of 1988. Twenty of these responded to the survey and an additional 10 housing providers serving older farmworkers were contacted later. Information contained in the following pages was collected from the 30 organizations who responded to the initial survey or subsequent telephone interviews.

The following findings were drawn from the Task Force survey:

- Only three housing facilities were developed with the older farmworker in mind. The other 27 sponsors interviewed serve older farmworkers because they are part of another population group (i.e. members of households eligible to live in publicly-funded farm labor or elderly housing).
- Only one housing facility serves older farmworkers exclusively.
- Less than an estimated 400 older or retired farmworkers live in the 1,121 units provided by the 30 surveyed organizations.



DENISE R. STEPHENSON

**Farmworker housing:
Tevison, California.**

- The Task Force's survey did not claim to find every facility that serves older farmworkers and it is encouraging to learn that some 400 older farmworkers are living in the facilities operated by surveyed groups. This is only a fraction, however, of the possibly hundreds of thousands of older farmworkers who are potentially eligible to live in these types of facilities.
- Public funds most likely to serve older farmworkers, in the order of frequency used by survey respondents, are:
 - (1) Farmers Home Administration Section 514 and 516 farm labor multi-family housing program. Seventeen of the 30 groups surveyed utilized FmHA Section 514/516 funds to develop multifamily housing units.
 - (2) HUD Section 202 elderly housing facilities. HUD financed the housing produced by four of the 30 survey respondents.
 - (3) Other funding sources. Six of the surveyed groups relied upon state, county or other funding for at least partial financing of developing housing facilities.
 - (4) Other Farmers Home Administration programs. Two of the surveyed organizations utilized FmHA Sections 502 and 504 repair programs for low-and moderate-income homeowners.
- Access to rental assistance subsidies for tenants was as important as production subsidies to make housing available to low-income farmworkers and retired farmworkers. Only two of the 30 surveyed projects are able to operate without rental assistance.

- Availability of substantial technical assistance and predevelopment resources was critical to the development of the housing facilities. Half of the organizations surveyed relied on technical assistance resources and testified to their importance in the development process.
- Sponsor organizations typically encountered tremendous obstacles to development of housing facilities. They exhibit a great deal of dedication and tenacity, both before and during the development and after the start of operation.
- On average, more than three years was needed to develop the housing facilities that serve older farmworkers. Ten of the sponsor groups stated that the time lapse between initial conception and occupancy of the housing was two to three years, eight reported that the time lapse was four to five years, two noted a timeframe less than two years and another two reported more than six years were needed between conception and occupancy.
- Eight of the 30 organizations surveyed were still in the planning and predevelopment stages at the time surveys were conducted. Six of the eight are now under construction or occupied, two are still trying to finalize financing. Planning for two of the projects has been halted since the survey was conducted because of FmHA's disapproval.
- Local opposition to the development of housing facilities was common, although once developed, most facilities were accepted into their local communities.
- Older farmworkers living in FmHA Section 514/516 housing are either working farmworkers, members of qualifying farmworker households or were active farmworkers residing in farm labor housing when they retired from farmwork.
- Although the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 permits retired farmworkers to qualify for residency in Section 514/516 housing, none of the farmworker housing providers interviewed had older farmworkers who qualified to live in the units under this law. Due to the inadequate number of units available, older farmworkers are given a lower priority for residing in the units than are employed farmworker families.
- Availability of local resources, including local government financing and grants from foundations and contributors, were often crucial to the successful development of housing opportunities.

- Older farmworkers need health, nutritional, educational, transportation and other support services, together with housing. Only five of the surveyed organizations provide support services, but other organizations cite the need and desire to provide support services if adequate funding were available.

Older farmworkers are not easily or readily served through existing publicly-financed housing programs. Older farmworkers are a neglected and disenfranchised group, despite lifetimes of labor.

5.

Design Features in Congregate Housing for Older Farmworkers



VICTOR ALEMAN/COURTESY OF JFW

***Older farmworker:
Napa, California.***

Congregate housing is one possible solution for the housing needs of retired farmworkers. This chapter covers selected design features that should be included in such a congregate project. Several factors are important: projects should include common space areas; unit designs should incorporate ease of accessibility and use for residents; cultural factors must be recognized; and costs should be kept to a minimum.

Congregate projects for farmworkers differ in some ways from proprietary congregate housing in that all the residents would share a common employment history. Because the older population in each farmworker community is relatively small, the projects would be small in size and could be established with a sense of community. Some residents are likely to know each other before taking up congregate occupancy. There also may be some recreational and cultural considerations. For example, in the California-based Agbiyani Center, there is ample space around the building for gardens, parking and animal pens, as the Agbiyani residents are very interested in gardening, collecting and working on automobiles and raising chickens. (See chapter 4).

Design concepts should also attempt to make congregate projects as "homelike" as possible, by providing an opportunity for socializing and for privacy. Particularly important are designs -- such as parking lots and ample common rooms -- which take into account residents' desires for visits from their families.

As with any housing project for low- and moderate-income individuals, congregate development and management costs are an important consideration. Holding down such costs is particularly important in an era of fiscal austerity. For cost reasons and reasons of simplicity, it may be useful to follow FmHA guidelines for congregate projects. For example, construction should be economical and not use extravagant plans or excessively expensive materials. For the most part, projects should also be one or two stories to save expenses for elevators, and individual units should be relatively compact in size.

Congregate housing requires attention to certain design features, particularly in the bathroom and kitchen. Wheelchair access is important, as are safety features such as handles and grab bars for help in pulling oneself up, steadying oneself and walking. For retired farmworkers, stooping and bending to reach low shelves or cabinets may be difficult, due to muscular or skeletal ailments developed during a life of stoop labor. Thus, low cabinets and drawers should be kept to a minimum.

A Prototype

In keeping with these economic, cultural and physical considerations, HAC has developed a prototype design consisting of a rectangular structure, with 18 individual and two double units facing onto two open courtyards. Ten single units surround one courtyard on three sides. Eight singles and the two double units surround the other courtyard. The double units have private baths. The single rooms have shared commodes between two units, and there are four bath/showers. Eight single units share two bath/showers in the upper courtyard, while ten units in the lower courtyard share the other two bath/showers (See figure A).

In the center of the complex, dividing the two courtyards, are the main hall, kitchen, storage and maintenance areas, and a caretaker's apartment.

The main hall is for dining, recreation, meetings and other general purposes. At one end is a sitting/reading/television area. Costs permitting, a fireplace can be a pleasant addition for this area. At the other end of the main hall, abutting the kitchen and cafeteria-style food service area, are dining tables which can serve other functions at non-meal times. The main hall is centrally located to allow ease of access for all tenants.

Its walls, facing into the courtyards, should consist entirely of windows. This will allow light into the hall and provide a sense of spaciousness through the length of the project.

Around the perimeter of the courtyards, hallways lead from rooms to the baths and the main hall. In warm climates, these hallways could be covered but open on the sides.

The enclosed courtyard is a popular architectural style in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries. This style may prove familiar and comfortable to some retired farmworkers of Hispanic origin. In keeping with this style, it might prove useful to incorporate a tile roof and white, stucco exterior walls. This approach should also readily fit into surrounding neighborhoods in the southwestern United States.

The HAC project would cost an estimated \$315,000 for total acquisition and construction expense, or \$15,750 per unit. This estimate is based on a cost of \$39 per square foot for the \$8,064 square foot

project (with dimensions of 84 by 96 feet). The \$39 cost figure is arrived at through comparison to other projects. For example, a recent non-elderly farm labor housing project planned by a nonprofit group and submitted to HAC for loan consideration cost \$687,000. The project's 17,630 square feet meant a cost of \$39 per foot (see Appendix B).

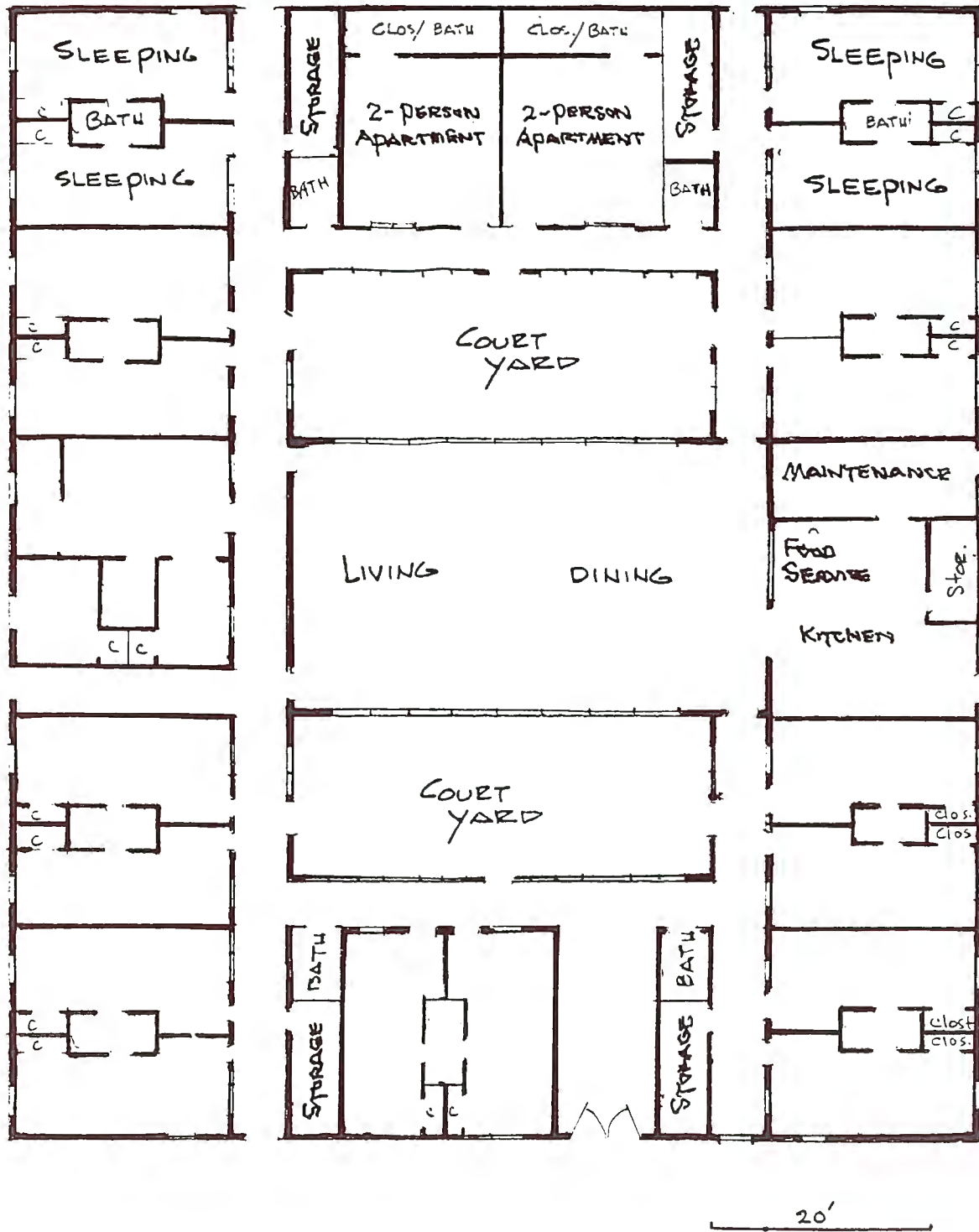
Other Designs. The HAC prototype envisions new construction. Another option is to rehabilitate a facility. Figures B and C are plans for attractive and well-designed congregate facilities in Massachusetts. These projects have made use of historic buildings which might otherwise have been abandoned or destroyed. The building in Figure B, the Peter Bulkeley project, was constructed in 1911 as the Peter Bulkeley school.

The project in Figure C is an older house with a substantial addition. The addition was built specifically to enlarge the original house into a congregate facility. Both these Massachusetts projects may be too expensive for the relatively limited resources which will, in most cases, be available for farmworker congregate housing. However, the Massachusetts projects do contain elements that would prove useful in any low- to moderate-income congregate housing. For example, shared baths and single rooms rather than apartments will be more economical.

Other designs for older farmworker housing are also included in this report. The Agbiyani Center complex in California--Figure D--has units in two wings radiating out from a central kitchen, dining and sitting room. Tenants have private rooms with a bath shared between every two rooms.

The Collier County, Florida, plan--Figure E--envisions a 12-unit congregate facility with shared baths, an enclosed courtyard, and a caretaker's apartment.

FIGURE A:
Plan for Farmworker Congregate Housing



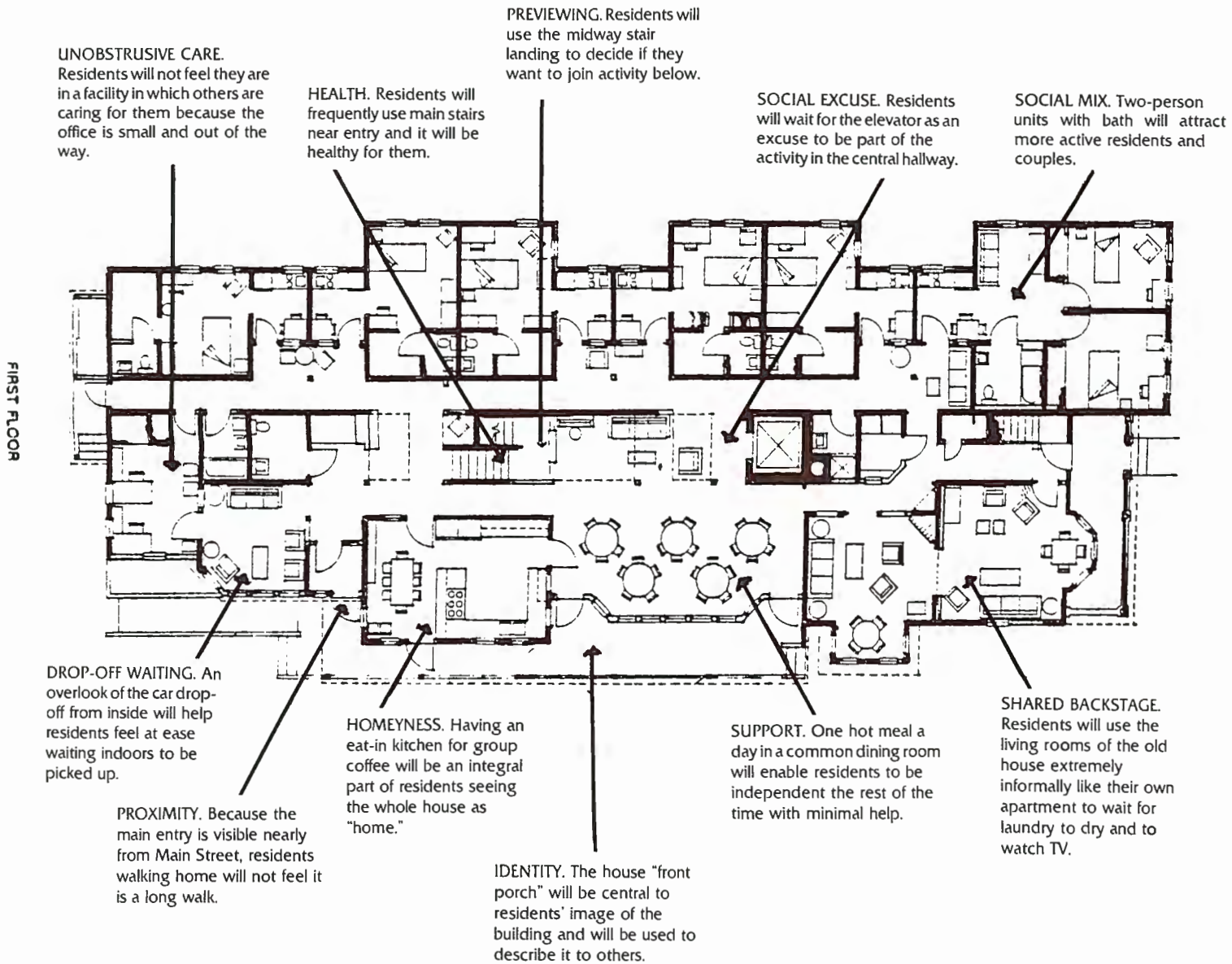


FIGURE B:
**Plan for Congregate Housing,
 Hyannis, Massachusetts**

SECOND FLOOR

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT. Having a private toilet for themselves will insure that older residents feel the environment supports them.

PRIVACY CONTROL. The bedroom privacy the design provides will enable residents to "open" the kitchenette without feeling ill at ease.

INDEPENDENCE. Being able to prepare small snacks and meals will help residents maintain a sense of independence.

INSIDE OUT. Snack table in kitchen, dutch doors, and interior window will allow residents to feel part of house life while remaining safe in their "home."

DISPLAY. Residents will put furniture and paintings on their "front porches" to express who they are.

SHARING. Residents will accept trade-off of sharing bathtub in exchange for congregate amenities.

PREVIEWING. Residents will look down below from elevator landings to prepare themselves better for social encounters.

SOCIAL ESCAPE. Residents will feel more comfortable using back stairs to get to Laundry and TV room, when in a dressing gown.

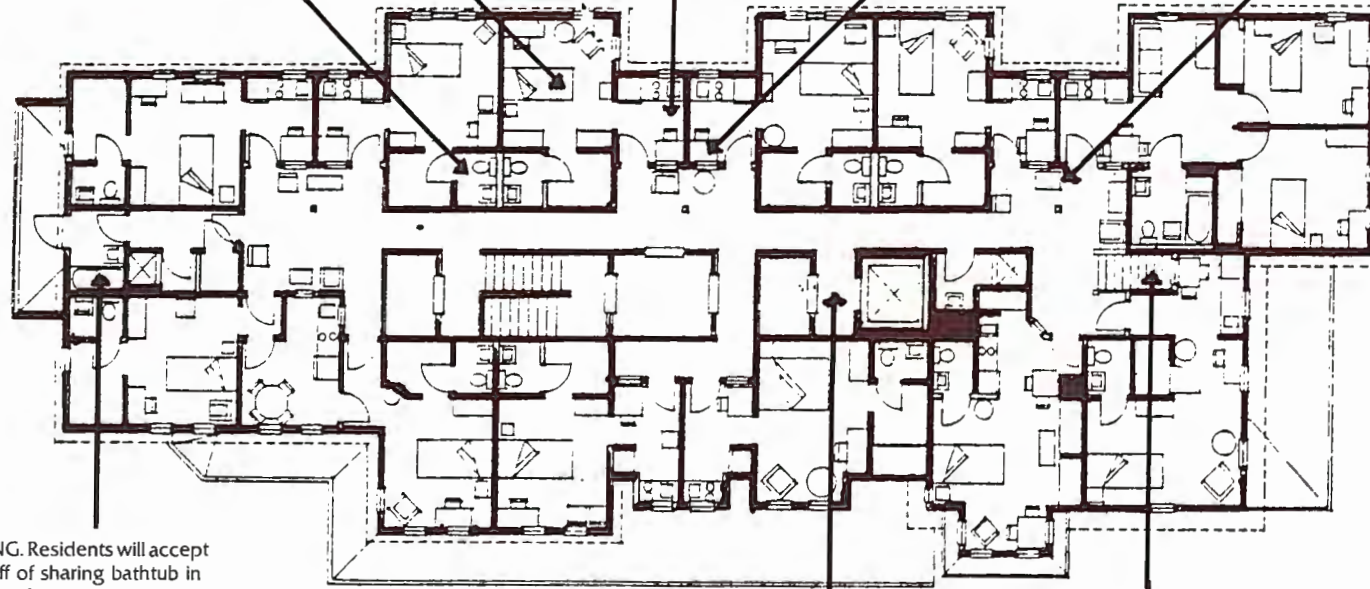


FIGURE C:
**Plan for Peter Bulkeley Congregate Elderly Housing,
Concord, Massachusetts**

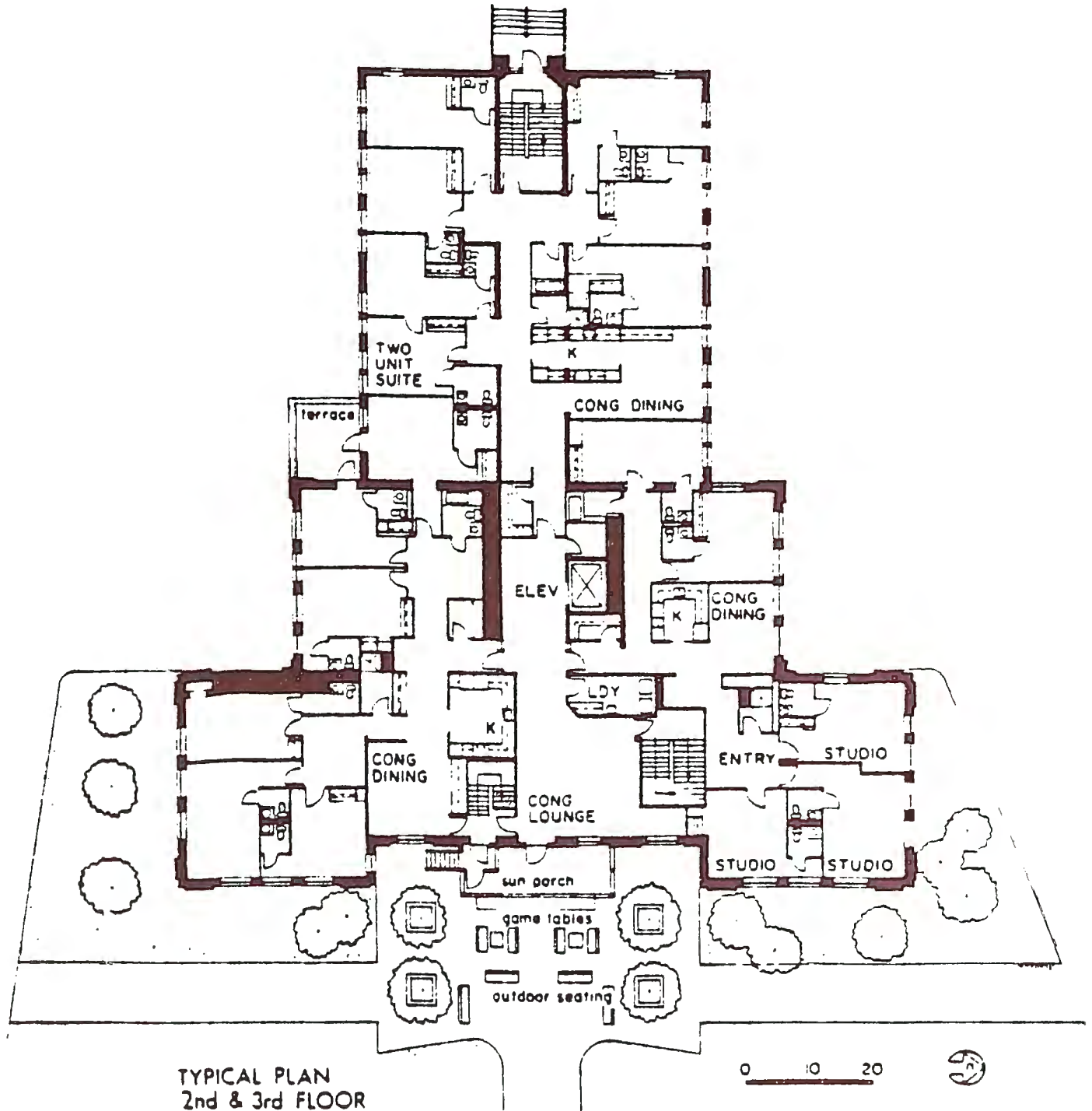


FIGURE D:
**Paulo Agbiyani Center,
 Delano, California**

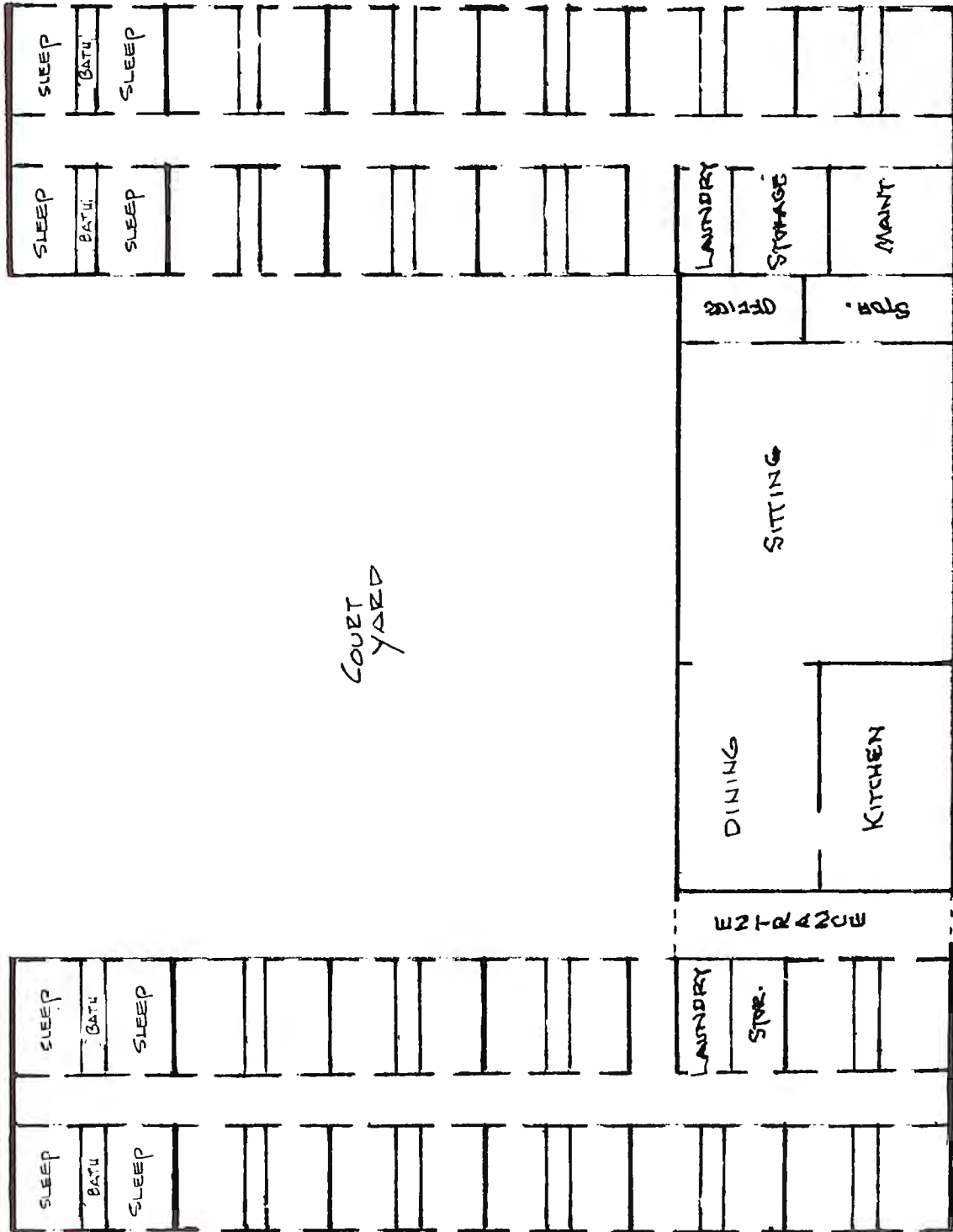
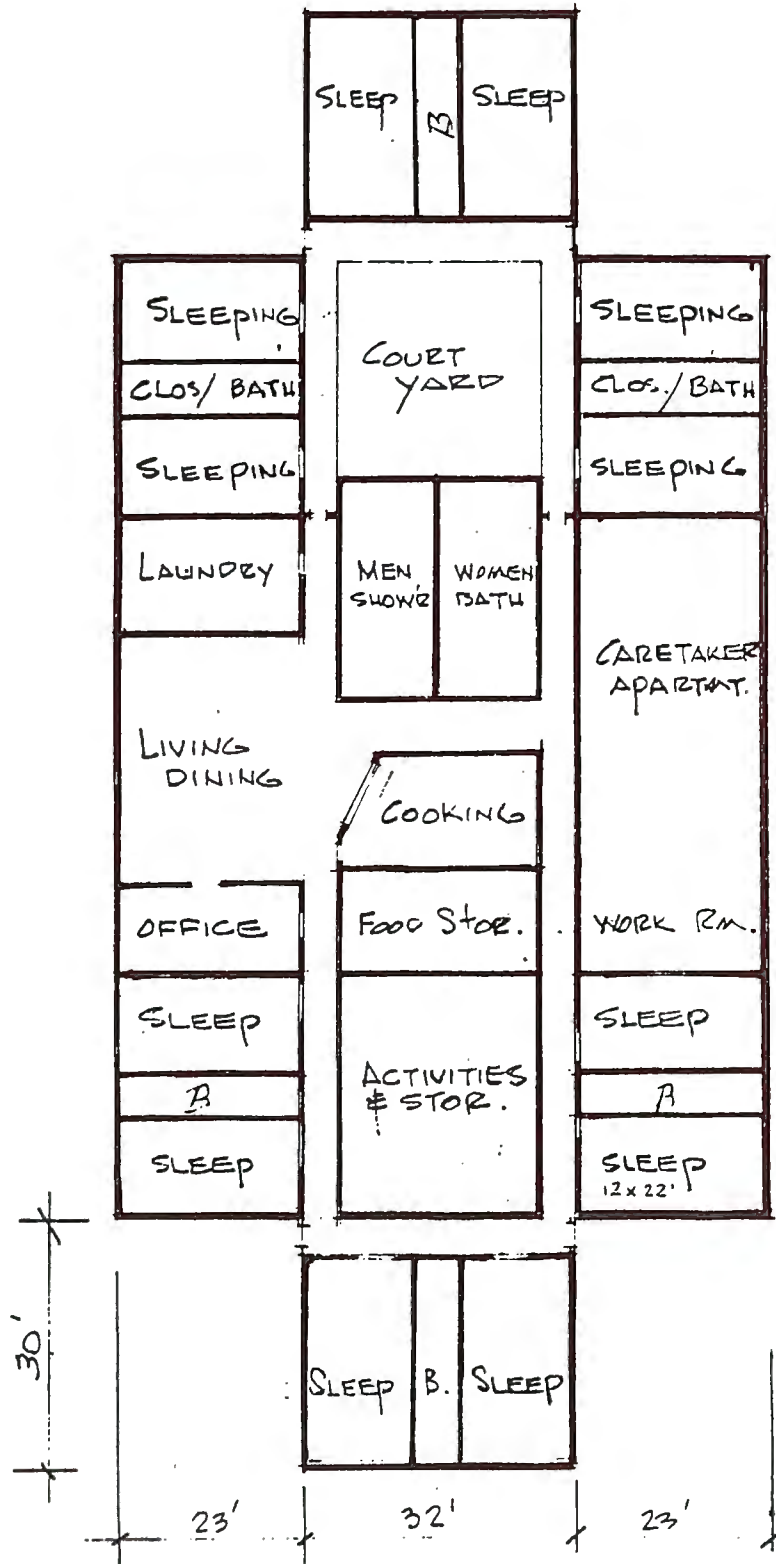


FIGURE E:
Project Imokalee,
Imokalee, Florida



6.

Recommendations and Conclusion



DENISE R. STEPHENSON

'Providing housing for older farmworkers is usually a low or non-existent priority.'

As has been documented in this report, farmworkers are a population faced with serious problems. Many face hardships such as toxic drinking water, malnutrition, low education and income levels, and poor health care. Farmworkers focus most of their energy on surviving today, not on planning for tomorrow. For many, housing is a luxury item and decent housing may be inconceivable.

Unfortunately, providing housing for older and retired farmworkers is usually a low or non-existent priority for government and farmworker groups. But after a lifetime of toil, older farmworkers need to be a priority. Their problems are characteristic of the entire farmworker community, whose plight is unknown by most Americans.

The difficult question is: How can decent housing be provided to older farmworkers when intolerable conditions are faced by nearly all farmworkers? The answer lies in gaining a better understanding of how older farmworker's problems relate to all farmworkers, and how these problems can be solved collectively. To promote better understanding, the National Task Force on Older Farmworkers has developed a series of recommendations.

The National Task Force, established in 1988, expresses its concerns in four areas:

1. The need for greater public awareness of the plight of older farmworkers.
2. The need for more and better research and data on the needs of older farmworkers.
3. The need for more technical assistance to housing developers to create affordable and supportive housing for older farmworkers.
4. And the need to create and reform local, state and federal programs that can improve living conditions for older farmworkers.

The National Task Force on Older Farmworkers has prepared the following specific recommendations:

Increased Appropriations

1. Increased appropriations for housing for migrant and seasonal farmworkers are needed, with special emphasis for those who are elderly and disabled.
2. In order to adequately serve older farmworkers, nonprofit housing sponsors need adequate resources for staff and management both during the development phase and after projects actually go into operation. HUD and FmHA should provide adequate resources at all phases of development and operation so that nonprofit organizations are encouraged to provide services to retired and disabled farmworkers.

Congressional Hearings

3. Congress should hold hearings such as the April 1990 forum convened by the House Select Committee on Aging, on issues affecting active, retired and disabled migrant and seasonal farmworkers, especially related to housing and federal benefits.

Research and Data

4. Because of the very limited data available on migrant and seasonal farmworkers, particularly elderly and disabled farmworkers, and the level and extent of their housing needs, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census should target research on the needs of this population.
5. Due to the potential adverse effect of displacing the domestic labor force engaged in agricultural labor, H2-A foreign workers should continue to be excluded from the FmHA definition of a farmworker.

6. A "Rural Homeless" initiative should be established to finance nonprofit organizations to build and operate temporary housing for migrant workers and their families during the migrant season and for other rural homeless during the rest of the year. The new migrant and homeless shelter program established in H.R. 1180 is a good beginning.

Technical Assistance

7. Rural areas need technical assistance and training. FmHA should provide comprehensive training for the following groups and subject areas:

- nonprofit developers and sponsors of farmworker housing on all phases of housing development;
- homeowners and building crew personnel on proper maintenance and minor repair of home, mechanical, and electrical systems; and
- FmHA staff in targeted state and district offices on farm labor housing grant and loan programs, and the process for grant or loan approval and support.

Accountability

8. Benefits programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps and housing assistance should conduct outreach to older and disabled farmworkers and should process applications for assistance in a timely manner. Special efforts should be made to eliminate language barriers to allow full participation in these programs.

9. In order to ensure the efficiency and timely processing of housing grants or loan applications, time limits should be imposed on FmHA for the completion of certain actions, including pre-application, application review, environmental assessment, and appraisals.

Sensitive Housing Design

10. For future development efforts, FmHA and HUD should encourage the use of housing designs which are more sensitive to family social structures, good management and upkeep, and supportive social services.

Home Repairs and Weatherization

11. The maximum amount of grant money allowed per house for low-income older homeowners in the FmHA Section 504 program is not adequate to remove health and safety hazards. Therefore, an increase is needed in the maximum amount of grant funds allowed per house for a low-income older homeowner to cover the costs of weatherization, repair, and preservation. For retired and disabled farmworkers, the age of eligibility for the Section 504 grant program should be lowered to 55 years.

FmHA 514/516 Programs

12. Retired and disabled farmworkers have been excluded as primary recipients in FmHA's Section 514 and 516 housing programs. Funding for the federal government housing programs should be expanded so that both active and retired farmworkers can have access to farm labor housing.

HUD 202 and FmHA 515 Programs

13. In HUD Section 202 and FmHA Section 515 projects for the elderly, priority should be given to sponsors who locate in areas with high concentrations of migrant and seasonal workers where retirement brings a heightened risk of homelessness.

Better Coordination

14. Greater coordination is needed between FmHA and the Department of Labor on housing and related services provided to active, retired, and disabled farmworkers. An annual memorandum of understanding with specific plans of action to serve these groups should be negotiated between the departments.

In conclusion, the authors of this report and the National Task Force on Older Farmworkers believe that the implementation of these recommendations would go a long way toward meeting the needs of one of America's most disadvantaged groups. The measure of a just society is found in its treatment of the least fortunate among its members. In late 20th-century America, the very young and the very old remain at the top of any list of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens. Among occupational groups, farmworkers have always been severely disadvantaged. Thus, when "farmworker" and "elderly" are combined, it is abundantly clear that we are describing a group of people who are often very much in need of help. They are also a group that has been mostly out of sight and out of mind. That can and should be changed.

Notes*

(1) USDA, A Time to Choose: Summary Report on the Structure of Agriculture. Washington, D.C. 1981, p. 133.

(2) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U. S. : 1985, p. 27.

(3) U.S. Executive Office of the President, Economic Report of the President, February 1985, p. 160.

(4) The prevalence of hypertension, coronary heart disease, hypertensive heart disease, ulcer, hernia, gall bladder disease, and emphysema is all higher in rural places, Kane, "Problems in Rural Health Care."

(5) U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Characteristics of the Population Below the Poverty Level.

(6) See Housing Assistance Council, Taking Stock and High-Poverty Counties in the United States.

(7) In 1987 there were 56.6 million occupied housing units in urban areas of the United States. Of these, 43 percent were rental units. But of the 23.1 million rural occupied units in 1987, only 20 percent were rental. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, American Housing Survey: 1987, p. 1.

(8) Ten sites were chosen for demonstrations:

- * Riverside County, California
- * Decatur County, Iowa
- * Lake County, Michigan
- * Claiborne County, New Hampshire
- * Carroll County, New Hampshire
- * Sierra County, New Mexico
- * Chautauqua County, New York
- * Baker County, Oregon
- * Charles Mix County, South Dakota
- * Accomac County, Virginia

(9) Cronin et al, An Evaluation of the FmHA-AoA Demonstration Program, pp. 66 215, 265-268, 1983.

(10) The Agricultural Work Force study has been used in this report because it is the most readily available and detailed analysis of agricultural workers. Pollack, The Hired Farm Force of 1983; and Oliveira and Cox, The Agricultural Work Force of 1987.

(11) Lillesand et al, An Estimate of the Number of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.

*Footnotes cited are taken from publications listed in the bibliography.

(12) Cortes, Handicapped Migrant Farmworkers.

(13) The 22 states included Arkansas, Delaware, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

(14) For more detailed information, see Housing Assistance Council, Taking Stock and High-Poverty Counties in the United States.

(15) Texas Rural Legal Aid, Farmworkers and Workers Compensation, p. 3.

(16) Miller and Maril, Poverty in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

(17) Texas Farmworkers Union, Building A Self-Reliant Community.

(18) Herbers, "States Forced Into Lead on Housing for the Poor, "New York Times.

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Appendix A: Tables

Table 1
Elderly Persons Below Poverty Level*, 1987

Race or Ethnic Group	Persons Age 65 & Over Below Poverty Level			
	All Areas		Nonmetro Areas	
	Number (1000s)	Poverty Rate (Percent)	Number (1000s)	Poverty Rate (Percent)
Total	3,491	12.2	1,154	15.6
White	2,597	10.1	845	12.6
Black	808	33.9	282	46.5
Hispanic	247	27.4	24	33.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

* \$5,447 per year for single elderly person.

Table 2
Hired Farmworkers, by Selected Age Groups, 1983 and 1987

Age Group	1983		1987	
	Total (1,000s)	Percent	Total (1,000s)	Percent
Total, All Ages	2,595	100	2,463	100
Ages				
45-54	197	8	216	9
55-64	168	6	148	6
65 & Over	80	3	67	3
Total, 45 & Over	445	17	431	18

Source: Victor J. Oliveira and E. Jane Cox, The Agricultural Work Force of 1987: A Statistical Profile, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Ag. Econ. Rept. No. 609, May 1989, p. 17; and Susan L. Pollock, The Hired Farm Working Force of 1983: A Statistical Profile, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Ag. Econ. Rept. No. 554, June 1986, pp. 10, 14.

Table 3
Hired Farmworkers, by Race and Selected Age Groups, 1987

Age Group	Total	Whites	Hispan- ics	Blacks and Others
		(1,000s)		
All Farmworkers	2,463	1,917	338	208
		(Percent)		
Ages				
45-54	8.8	8.3	11.1	9.6
55-64	6.0	5.9	4.4	9.4
65 & Over	2.7	2.4	3.3	4.9

Source: Oliveira and Cox, p. 3.

Table 4
Hired Farmworkers, by Days of Farmwork for Selected Age Groups, 1987

Age Group	Total	Less Than 25	Days Worked			
			25- 74	75- 149	150- 249	250 or More
(1,000s)						
Ages						
45-54	216	49	33	30	47	57
55-64	148	50	13	22	31	33
65 & Over	67	20	15	8	9	15
Total, 45 & Over	431	119	51	60	87	105
(Percent)						
Ages						
45-54	100	23	15	14	22	26
55-64	100	34	9	15	21	22
65 & Over	100	30	22	12	13	22
Total, 45 & Over	100	28	12	14	20	24

Source: Oliveira and Cox, p. 7.

Table 5
**Days Worked and Earnings of Hired Farmworkers,
 by Selected Age Groups, 1987**

Age Group	Number of Workers	Farm & Nonfarm Earnings	Hired Farmwork		Workers Doing Farmwork Only		
			Days Worked	Annual Earnings	Number of Workers	Days Worked	Annual Earnings
	1,000s	Dollars	Number	Dollars	1,000s	Number	Dollars
All Hired Farmworkers	2,463	6,683	112	3,368	1,301	152	4,685
Ages							
45-54	216	8,032	148	5,507	153	175	6,538
55-64	148	6,780	138	4,142	104	157	4,771
65 & Over	67	4,522	126	3,010	57	133	3,227

Source: Oliveira and Cox, p. 17.

Table 6
**Educational Attainment of Total Population and Hispanics,
 by Age and Residence, 1979**

Age and Location	Years of School Completed			
	Male		Female	
	Less Than 5 Years	4 Years Hi School or More	Less Than 5 Years	4 Years Hi School or More
	(Percent)			
<u>25-44 Years</u>				
Total Population	1.4	82.6	1.3	80.5
Metropolitan	1.3	84.3	1.2	82.2
Nonmetropolitan	1.5	78.8	1.3	76.7
Hispanic	12.3	49.8	10.7	50.6
Metropolitan	11.8	49.9	10.2	50.9
Nonmetropolitan	15.3	49.0	14.0	48.7
<u>45 Years & Over</u>				
Total Population	5.9	55.1	4.8	56.0
Metropolitan	4.7	59.6	4.2	58.8
Nonmetropolitan	8.2	46.6	6.1	50.4
Hispanic	26.6	30.4	28.2	27.6
Metropolitan	23.2	33.1	26.0	29.0
Nonmetropolitan	43.3	17.0	40.0	19.5

Source: Frank Fratoe, The Education of Nonmetro Hispanics,
 USDA, ERS.

Table 7
Income and Other Sources of Support for Older and Retired Farmworkers

How many older farm- workers in your area	Percent of Responding Organizations						
	All	Almost All	Over Half	About Half	Less Than Half	Almost None	None
	(Percent)						
Have nonfarm earnings?	8	8	13	-	25	42	4
Receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI)?	4	22	4	30	9	30	-
Receive Social Security?	4	17	21	25	8	21	4
Receive food stamps?	16	28	24	8	20	4	-
Receive Medicaid?	9	22	39	9	13	9	-
Are eligible for Medicare?	10	20	35	25	-	10	-
Live in subsidized housing?	-	4	4	9	22	48	13

Source: Housing Assistance Council, Older Farmworker Survey, 1986.

Table 8
Health Problems of Older and Retired Farmworkers

How many older farmworkers in your area have	All	Percent of Responding Organizations					
		Almost All	Over Half	About Half	Less Than Half	Almost None	None
		(Percent)					
Respiratory or lung problems?	-	-	16	26	42	11	5
Circulatory or heart problems?	-	17	17	17	44	5	-
Problems due to pesticide exposure?	-	6	18	23	35	12	6
Digestive problems?	-	6	6	41	35	6	6
Problems due to work-related accidents?	-	-	12	6	47	29	6
Bone, joint or muscular problems?	-	24	29	12	35	-	-
Mental or emotional problems?	-	-	17	17	22	33	11

Source: Housing Assistance Council, Older Farmworker Survey, 1986.

Table 9
Persons Employed in Farmwork, Age 55 and Over, U.S., 1980

Persons Employed in Farmwork	55 to 64 Years of Age	65 Years and Over
Whites	83,400	81,500
Blacks	18,800	14,420
Hispanics	18,320	6,940
Others	5,400	4,420
Total	109,140	130,920

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 10
Persons Employed in Farmwork, Age 55 and Over, California, 1980

Persons Employed in Farmwork	55 to 64 Years of Age	65 Years and Over
Whites	9,760	6,380
Blacks	840	560
Hispanics	9,600	3,120
Others	3,500	3,060
Total	23,700	13,120

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 11

Persons Employed in Farmwork, Age 55 and Over, Florida, 1980

Persons Employed in Farmwork	55 to 64 Years of Age	65 Years and Over
Whites	4,920	3,300
Blacks	4,060	2,300
Hispanics	1,040	360
Others	80	60
Total	10,100	6,020

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 12

Persons Employed in Farmwork, Age 55 and Over, Texas, 1980

Persons Employed in Farmwork	55 to 64 Years of Age	65 Years and Over
Whites	4,240	4,740
Blacks	1,160	2,800
Hispanics	5,040	2,480
Others	120	-
Total	10,560	10,020

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 13
**Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by Farmworkers,
 Age 55 and Over, U.S., 1980**

Race	Total	With Complete Plumbing	Without Complete Plumbing	Percent Without Plumbing
<u>Age 55 to 64</u>				
All Farm- workers	128,380	112,160	16,220	12.6
White	81,980	74,680	7,300	8.9
Black	20,500	14,600	5,900	28.8
Hispanic	20,320	17,660	2,660	13.1
Others	5,580	5,220	360	6.5
<u>Age 65 & Over</u>				
All Farm- workers	107,560	91,260	16,300	15.2
White	80,440	71,040	9,400	11.7
Black	14,840	9,820	5,020	33.8
Hispanic	7,420	6,060	1,360	18.3
Others	4,860	4,340	520	10.7

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 14
**Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by Farmworkers,
 Age 55 and Over, California, 1980**

Race	Total	With Complete Plumbing	Without Complete Plumbing	Percent Without Plumbing
<u>Age 55 to 64</u>				
All Farm- workers	23,900	22,600	1,300	5.8
White	9,860	9,640	220	2.3
Black	740	720	20	2.7
Hispanic	10,140	9,120	1,020	10.1
Others	3,160	3,120	40	1.3
<u>Age 65 & Over</u>				
All Farm- workers	13,000	12,780	700	5.4
White	6,320	6,220	100	1.6
Black	540	480	60	11.1
Hispanic	3,140	2,820	320	10.2
Others	3,000	2,780	220	7.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 15
**Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by Farmworkers,
 Age 55 and Over, Florida, 1980**

Race	Total	With Complete Plumbing	Without Complete Plumbing	Percent Without Plumbing
<u>Age 55 to 64</u>				
All Farmworkers	9,800	8,700	1,100	11.2
White	4,720	4,440	280	5.9
Black	3,980	3,360	620	15.6
Hispanic	1,040	840	200	19.2
Others	60	60	-	-
<u>Age 65 & Over</u>				
All Farmworkers	5,960	8,700	1,100	11.2
White	3,240	3,160	80	2.5
Black	2,300	1,980	320	13.9
Hispanic	360	360	-	-
Others	60	40	20	33.3

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 16
**Characteristics of Housing Units Occupied by Farmworkers,
 Age 55 and Over, Texas, 1980**

Race	Total	With Complete Plumbing	Without Complete Plumbing	Percent Without Plumbing
<u>Age 55 to 64</u>				
All Farm- workers	10,720	9,360	1,360	12.7
White	4,160	4,060	120	2.9
Black	1,440	1,180	260	18.1
Hispanic	5,020	4,040	980	19.5
Others	120	120	-	-
<u>Age 65 & Over</u>				
All Farm- workers	8,960	8,180	780	8.7
White	4,700	4,520	180	3.8
Black	1,800	1,520	280	15.6
Hispanic	2,460	2,140	320	13.0
Others	-	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the
 Census, unpublished data.

Table 17

Educational Attainment of Farmworkers, Age 55 and Over, U.S., 1980

Race	Years of School Completed,			
	Age 55 to 64, Percent With		Age 65 & Over, Percent With	
	Less Than 8	12 or More	Less Than 8	12 or More
	(Percent)			
All Farm- workers	35	30	36	22
White	19	39	24	25
Black	62	11	76	7
Hispanic	77	8	80	7
Others	21	50	48	25

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, unpublished data.

Table 18
Persons By Origin and Language, South Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 1980

Character- istic	County				Total
	Cameron	Hidalgo	Starr	Willacy	
All Persons	209,727	283,229	27,266	17,495	537,717
Native Born	169,672	226,906	21,343	15,304	432,825
Foreign Born	40,055	56,323	5,923	2,191	104,492
Percent of Total	19.1	19.9	21.7	12.5	19.4
Naturalized	15,107	20,298	1,899	775	38,079
Not a Citizen	24,948	36,025	4,024	1,416	66,413
Mexican Born	35,032	51,107	5,381	2,000	93,520
Percent of Foreign Born	87.5	90.7	90.8	91.3	89.5
Immigrated 1975-80	9,403	13,120	422	1,891	24,836
Persons Speaking Language Other Than English at Home	144,096	203,595	23,383	12,509	383,583
Percent Age 55 and Over	76.6	80.4	88.4	79.7	79.3
Speaking English Not Well or Not at All	41,052	60,606	8,431	3,031	113,120
Percent Age 55 and Over	21.8	23.9	31.9	19.3	23.4

* Proportion increases with age of resident.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 19
Persons by Poverty, Age and Spanish Origin
South Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 1980

Character- istic	County				Total
	Cameron	Hidalgo	Starr	Willacy	
All Persons*	207,468	281,298	27,052	17,411	533,229
Age 60 & Over	26,413	34,659	3,065	2,287	66,424
Age 65 & Over	19,272	25,075	2,254	1,709	48,310
Spanish Origin	160,424	229,263	26,252	14,003	429,972
Age 60 & Over	13,123	18,070	2,908	1,336	35,437
Age 65 & Over	9,538	12,874	2,138	999	25,549
Poor Persons	66,046	99,081	13,698	6,065	184,890
Poverty Rate (%)	31.8	35.2	50.6	34.8	34.7
Age 60 & Over	6,593	9,548	1,472	770	18,383
Poverty Rate (%)	25.0	27.5	48.0	33.7	27.7
Age 65 & Over	5,046	7,240	1,166	623	14,575
Poverty Rate (%)	26.2	28.9	51.7	36.5	30.2
Poor Persons of Spanish Origin	61,065	93,660	13,550	5,658	173,933
Poverty Rate (%)	38.1	40.9	51.6	52.8	40.5
Age 60 & Over	5,252	7,879	1,448	651	15,230
Poverty Rate (%)	40.0	43.6	49.8	48.7	43.0
Age 65 & Over	4,093	5,901	1,149	532	11,675
Poverty Rate (%)	42.9	45.8	53.7	53.3	45.7

* Sample does not include institutionalized persons (including many of the elderly).

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 20
Unrelated Individuals by Poverty, Age, and Spanish Origin
South Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 1980

Character- istic	County				Total
	Cameron	Hidalgo	Starr	Willacy	
Unrelated Individuals	11,942	14,571	995	853	28,361
Poor Persons	4,932	5,940	694	492	12,058
Poverty Rate (%)	41.3	43.8	69.7	57.7	41.1
Age 65 & Over	4,788	5,511	497	480	11,276
Poor Persons	2,162	2,802	358	313	5,635
Poverty Rate (%)	45.2	50.8	72.0	65.2	50.0
Unrelated Individuals Of Spanish Origin	5,970	7,139	950	473	14,532
Poor Persons	3,516	4,415	680	376	8,987
Poverty Rate (%)	58.9	61.8	71.6	79.5	61.8
Age 65 & Over	2,155	2,571	463	276	5,465
Poor Persons	1,606	2,058	351	252	4,267
Poverty Rate	74.5	80.5	75.8	91.3	78.1

* Sample does not include institutionalized persons (including many of the elderly).

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 21
**Housing Conditions for Elderly Householders of Spanish Origin,
 South Rio Grande Valley of Texas, 1980**

Character- istic	County				Total
	Cameron	Hidalgo	Starr	Willacy	
Occupied Housing Units	6,244	8,408	1,398	656	16,706
Owner Occupied	4,545	6,409	1,219	554	12,727 (76%)
Lacking Complete Plumbing	884	1,304	150	93	2,431 (15%)
No Complete Kitchen Facilities	648	959	203	39	1,849 (11%)
No Vehicle Available	2,751	3,168	559	265	6,743 (40%)
No Telephone	1,177	1,749	521	200	3,647 (22%)
Lacking Central Heating	4,776	6,434	166	577	11,943 (72%)
Lacking Air Conditioning	4,479	6,033	893	544	11,949 (72%)

* This sample includes only households with householder or spouse over 65. Most of the elderly of Spanish origin in the region live in households headed by the nonelderly and are thus subject to the housing conditions prevailing for the general population of Spanish origin.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

Appendix B
Housing Assistance Council Loan Request Summary

Meeting Date : May 22, 1986
Review Number : _____
Ranking : _____

APPLICANT:

LOCATION :

PROJECT : 16 units FmHA 514/516 Farm Labor Project

HAC LOANS: NONE

REQUEST : Amount: \$61,750

RECOMMEND: Amount: \$61,750

Purposes : site acquisition

Purposes : site acquisition

Security : first mortgage

Security : first mortgage

Applicant's Background:

Applicant is a state chapter of La Raza Unida, and has experience in operating employment training programs.

Project Description:

16 unit family FmHA 514/516 farm labor housing project to be built on a site to be purchased from the Town of Jefferson. For reasons of political and public opposition, the site must be purchased when the option expires 05/31/86.

Project Status:

Discussion with the FmHA District Office indicates that the project is awaiting expiration of a two week comment period following publication of a Class II Environmental ad. Regardless of comment, the project application will be sent to the FmHA state office for approval. The land costs are acceptable, the application is in order and the District Office presently expects the project to go to completion.

Special Concerns:

The project has well organized local opposition directed against housing for Mexican-American farm workers.

No other concerns are apparent at this time except a quick turn around on land purchase.

Multiple Family Housing Summary of Project Costs

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Estimate</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Actual</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Outside dimensions of buildings</p> <p>Number of Buildings <u>4</u></p> <p>Number of Living Units <u>16</u></p> <p>Number 3 BR Handicap <u>1</u> Sq. Ft. <u>1,325</u></p> <p>Number 2 Bedrooms <u>12</u> Sq. Ft. <u>12,660</u></p> <p>Number 3 Bedrooms <u>3</u> Sq. Ft. <u>3,645</u></p>	Estimate		Actual		<p>APPLICANT NAME _____</p> <p>DATE _____</p> <p>Bldg. 1,2: 81-6 1/2 x 48-1 Bldg. 5:</p> <p>Bldg. 3: 90-1 x 48-1</p> <p>Bldg. 4: 91-8 1/2 x 48-1</p> <p>Bldg. 5: 20-0 x 14-0</p>
Estimate					
Actual					

	CONTRACT	BORROWER METHOD	TOTAL
<u>UNIT COSTS</u>		<u>Material</u>	<u>Labor</u>
Gen. Const.			402,800
Electrical			53,000
Heating			10,600
Plumbing			63,600
Landscaping			
Excavating			
Total			
Contracts			530,000
<u>EQUIPMENT</u>			
Range			
Refrigerator			
Washer/Dryer			
Total Equip.			
*Builders Fee			20,000
Total			
Construction			
Legal			2,000
Architect and Engineering			21,000
***Land-Optioned (x) Owned ()			61,750
Street Improvement			
Sewer and Water to site			
Interest			
Contingency			18,250
OTHER COSTS: Survey	1,000	Other DILHR	2,000
I.O.C.	16,000	Printing	2,000
TOTAL OTHER COSTS		Soil Borings	1,000
Total Project Cost		2% Operations	12,000
Amount of Loan			687,000

Multiple Family Housing Summary of Project Costs cont.

FOR FmHA OFFICE USE

** Cost of Building	_____	Cost per unit	_____
Borrowers Initial Investment	_____	Borrower Contribution to Project	_____
Land	_____	Land	_____
Cash to Project	_____	Cash	_____
Cash to	_____	Total Contribution	_____
O & M Acct.	_____	Loan Amount	_____
Total Investment	_____		

* Allowed only when contract method of construction is waived by FmHA. (owner/builder) method of construction - Builder's fee determined by FmHa.

**Project cost less value of land, landscaping, street improvement, sewer and water.

***Insert FmHA appraised value, if final estimate: option price if estimate cost.

Appendix C

Portions of a letter to the National Task Force on Older Farmworkers from Silvia Caballero:

... there is obviously a need to develop program resources and improvement in housing, health care, and other issues for older farmworkers. . .

If you look at a 1987 study prepared by the Washington House of Representatives Office of Program Research, the average migrant farm worker has a life expectancy of 49 years... the poor health of farmworkers and their families is well documented, and is caused by factors such as poor diet, bad living and working conditions, poor sanitation and language problems that prevent many from finding help.

In a more personal view, I am very sensitive to the needs of the older farmworkers. My mother, Dolores, is a very good example. She and my father have been farmworkers since they were both 18 years of age when they first came into the United States in 1947. She bore life to 11 of us children while working out in the fields and suffering from a bad case of varicose veins for several years. Finally in 1970 we settled here in Oregon and began to look for better housing other than farm labor camps. It was a long and frustrating process trying to find a decent and affordable place to live that would accept a large family.

Dolores has not been a farmworker for several years now but I can still see the impact on her life. Since my father's death three years ago, her only income has been a mere \$150 a month from my father's pension.

An entire life time of farm labor and then caring for my father for several years, who died of diabetes and kidney failure, prevented her from going back to school to develop some skills for a good job and advance her English vocabulary. She is 62 years of age now, very tired of the long rough road she has traveled and yet taking advantage of any job training opportunities she can to obtain a real job in order to support herself. She is currently under a job training program called Green Thumb through the Oregon Employment Division. Working at the Virginia Gracia Health Clinic, a family medical clinic for farmworkers, has been a real challenge for her at this age. She is very self-conscious of the progress in her training. Asking questions about something just explained was a real problems for her. To be working in a real office environment and learning just the basic clerical duties has been difficult, but according to her immediate supervisor, she is doing very well and has met the clinic's needs for a clerical assistant.

A Publication of



American Association of Retired Persons

Consumer Affairs • Program Coordination and Development Department
and the

AARP Minority Affairs Initiative