



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2023

Beth-El Releases New Dates for the Food and Farm Worker Relief Program

Wimauma: On June 27, Beth-El Farm Worker Ministry, Inc. will release new dates to process applications for the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) program serving farm and food workers in the counties of Hillsborough, Manatee, and Hardee.

In partnership with the Hispanic Federation, the program was on pause until June 12, 2023, in response to the overwhelming demand for aid and the increased scam and fraud cases nationwide. The most common scams and fraud alerts include persons requiring payment from workers to complete the application. Application assistance from approved partner agencies is always free. Other fraud cases may include applicants providing personal information and documents to unauthorized organizations and individuals. Federal grant officials updated and implemented new guidelines and eligibility requirements to ensure the funds go to the intended population.

During June, Beth-El worked on revising more than 500 applications to collect additional information from applicants and employers to verify their eligibility. In some cases, this process may have delayed the disbursement of funds from two weeks to six weeks. To ensure prompt disbursement of funds Beth-El is limiting the number of applications processed to 50-75 per week. To manage the volume of applicants and minimize waiting time, Beth-El developed an appointment system to serve applicants at their location in Wimauma and will be coordinating application processing events at places of employment.

In partnership with the Hispanic Federation, Beth-El Farm Worker Ministry will be processing applications for a one-time **\$600** payment for expenses incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The payment intends to serve eligible frontline hired workers who performed farming tasks from January 27, 2020, until May 11, 2023.

Immigration status is not one of the eligibility criteria. Workers must provide a photo identification that includes their date of birth as proof of identity and proof of employment. Workers in management positions, grocery store workers, and supervisors are not eligible for this program. Minors between 16 and 18 can apply with proof of identity and employment. Multiple members of one household can receive the payment. All eligible workers must complete their application in person.

Eligible frontline hired farm and food workers must show one identification with a photo that includes their date of birth. Some acceptable proof of identification examples includes a passport, state-issued, foreign, consular registration, H2A /H2B Visa, or work-related identification. Beth-El cannot accept identifications without a photo and date of birth.

Proof of employment must cover the eligibility period between January 27, 2020, and May 11, 2023. It must include the name of the employer. Preferred forms of proof of employment include W-2 Tax Form, paystub by the employer, and H2A/H2B Visa.

If these are not available, the applicant can present a letter from their employer or contract. A template is available on the website. A letter from an employer may include a second proof of employment, such as a photo or agency attestation.

If the applicant cannot provide a letter from the employer, they can present a self-attestation (template provided on the website), and a second proof of employment is required, such as a photograph or agency attestation letter.

For new dates and updates please visit the webpage at <https://beth-el.org/ffwr/>. Follow Beth-El on Facebook @befarmworker. Farmworkers are encouraged to chat with Beth-El's through their WhatsApp business account to request to be added to the FFWR Group for updates.

About USDA Covid-19 Economic Relief for Farmworkers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture USDA's Farm and Food Workers Relief Program (FFWR) provides a one-time \$600 payment for expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You may qualify if you were a frontline worker in USDA-approved farming activities during the pandemic period.

This is a benefit that is released once per verified eligible worker. This is not a renewable or annual benefit. Once a worker has been verified as eligible, the worker will receive a single \$600 payment to be released in a single financial transaction.

About Beth-El

Mission: Feeding the Mind, Spirit, and Body of the farm working community and our neighbors in need, through opportunities for hunger relief, education, healthcare, and spiritual growth. Since 1976, Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, Inc. encourages and assists farm workers, their families, and neighbors in South Hillsborough County with efforts to relieve food insecurity, providing access to educational opportunities, career advancement, and spiritual care.

Our services include a weekly food distribution on site and at the farms, a monthly free dental clinic, a thrift store, direct emergency services, and a scholarship and mentoring program for youth and young adults.

Nuevo Camino at Beth-El is our Hispanic/Latino Christian faith community with reformed tradition services held twice a week.

Beth-El is one of the four founding organizations of the Wimauma Together Collaborative, along with Enterprising Latinas, RCMA, and Hispanic Services Council. We also work in partnership with Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) and Gulf Coast Legal Services.

CONNECT WITH BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

Website: <https://beth-el.org>

Social Media Handles:

Facebook	@befarmworker
Twitter	@farmwkrministry
IG	@bethelfarmworker
WhatsApp	https://wa.me/message/YPBBJUQGRKRZL1