

**Farmworker Equity Express  
Annual Evaluation Report  
Fiscal Year 2023-2024**



**SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**

# San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Mental Health Services Act Innovation Evaluation

Farmworker Equity Express Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2023-2024

This report was developed by RDA Consulting under contract with the County of San Mateo Behavioral Health and Recovery Services.

RDA Consulting, 2024



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
& RECOVERY SERVICES**



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# COMMUNITY SUMMARY



The Farmworker Equity Express program, launched in partnership between Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) and San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), began in August 2023 to address the mental health needs of farmworkers and their families in San Mateo County. Funded through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Innovation (INN) component, this program strives to improve access to behavioral health care for a community often facing challenges like isolation, language barriers, and limited health services. The program uses a mobile bus that travels to farms across the region, bringing culturally responsive mental health support to over 1,500 farmworkers and their families in familiar, accessible settings.

## Evaluation Overview

In collaboration with ALAS, RDA Consulting (RDA and hereafter the evaluation team) conducted an evaluation of the Farmworker Equity Express program using a mixed-methods approach to address the following four evaluation questions (EQs):

- 1 How is the Farmworker Equity Express program being implemented over time? **[Program Implementation]**
- 2 To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program, a culturally responsive mobile behavioral health resource, expand access to and utilization of behavioral health services in the Latinx farmworker community? **[Access to Services]**
- 3 To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program, an integrated approach using cultural arts and formal clinical services, support behavioral health service adoption and outcomes among the Latinx farmworker community? **[Participant Outcomes]**
- 4 To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program identify the needs and best practices to support farmworker behavioral health? **[Needs and Best Practices]**

The evaluation employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including:

- 

**Focus Groups**

  - Program Participants
  - ALAS Staff
  - Cultural Arts Providers
- 

**Surveys and Forms**

  - Participant Survey
  - Intake Assessment Form
- 

**Meetings and Observations**

  - Monthly Evaluation Meeting Notes
  - Site Observation

Using the data sources, the evaluation team analyzed Farmworker Equity Express implementation processes and adaptations, services, strengths, as well as challenges. The evaluation team also examined program participant demographics, experiences with the program, program satisfaction, and outcomes. Finally, the evaluation team explored participant needs and program best practices.

## EQ1. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### Key Service Offerings

To meet the needs of program participants, the Farmworker Equity Express Program offered a variety of services (Figure 1):

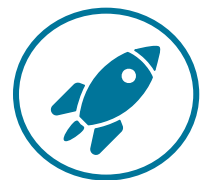
Figure 1. Key Service Offerings



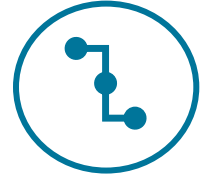
### Program Adaptations and Innovations

**Program Launch.** ALAS intended to launch the Farmworker Equity Express program in July 2023; however, due to delays in contracting approval on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, the program ultimately launched in August 2023.

**Evaluation Processes.** ALAS and RDA held a launch meeting for the MHSA program evaluation in July 2023 and collaboratively participated in a series of culturally responsive evaluation planning sessions that took place in August, September, and October 2023.



**Referral Pipeline.** In the Fall of 2023, ALAS began solidifying plans to use their monthly thematic workshops as a pipeline for initial client engagement and connection to other program services, such as individual therapy. The team worked to finalize a protocol for their referral and tracking system in December 2023.



**Service Developments.** The team launched several new service groups and offerings between the Fall of 2023 and the Spring of 2024, based on participant feedback, including:



- Asesoría individual (individual counseling),
- Asesoría grupal (group counseling),
- Exploración o evaluación (screening or assessment),
- Actividades artísticas culturales (cultural arts activities),
- Arte como Sanación (Art as a Form of Healing group),
- Grupos Compadres (Friends group),
- Grupos Corazones de Oro (Hearts of Gold group),
- Taller/grupo de parejas (Couples group),
- Hijas de la Luna (Daughters of the Moon group),
- Aprendiendo y jugando (Learning and Playing group),
- Reinas de Corazones (Queen of Hearts group),
- Grupos de madres "Bebé y yo" ("Baby and Me" Mothers group),
- Talleres sobre el duelo (Grief workshops), and
- Basic needs support.

**Mobile Service Engagement.** During the storms and flooding in the Winter and Spring, ALAS staff creatively adapted to the conditions by using a truck to provide in-the-field services, until the mobile services bus began running again in May 2024.



**Community Engagement.** ALAS engaged current and new program participants at a variety of social and community events throughout FY 23-24.



**Advisory Board Development.** ALAS experienced some delays in developing and convening a community advisory board. After months of diligent recruitment and planning, the program's first community advisory board meeting took place in May 2024.



**Staff Transitions.** In February 2024, the team welcomed a new program director to the program. In the Spring of 2024, ALAS underwent an operations office restructuring that led to a staff transition for the team's original assistant director to a community liaison role.





## EQ2. ACCESS TO SERVICES

### Program Engagement and Awareness

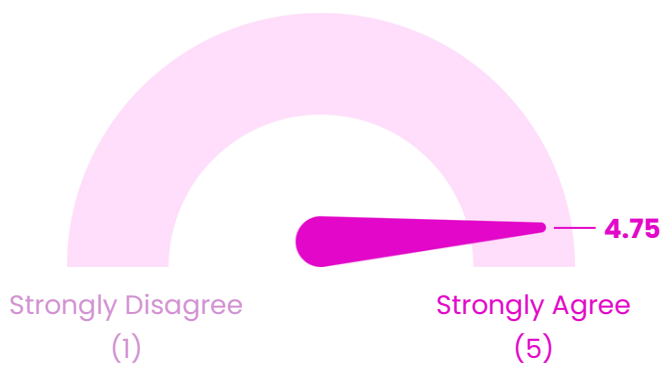
- The Farmworker Equity Express program made significant strides in breaking down barriers to behavioral health care, effectively **expanding farmworkers' access to and utilization of behavioral health services**.
- By incorporating the mobile bus, the program **reduced common barriers** such as transportation, cost, and time, making it easier for farmworkers to engage in the services offered.
- **Culturally relevant activities and an emphasis on relationship-building** were also key program elements that influenced how farmworkers engaged with services.
- Initially, **farmworkers were not fully aware of the mobile bus' purpose** or the services it provided. In response, program staff organized a welcoming event, inviting farmworkers to a get-together with music, food, and activities to introduce the bus and explain its offerings.

### Service Accessibility

The Farmworker Equity Express program prioritized accessibility by ensuring services were **culturally responsive, resource-oriented, and conveniently delivered** (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Participant Survey Respondents' Experiences with Service Accessibility, N=8

On average, participant survey respondents **strongly agree** that:



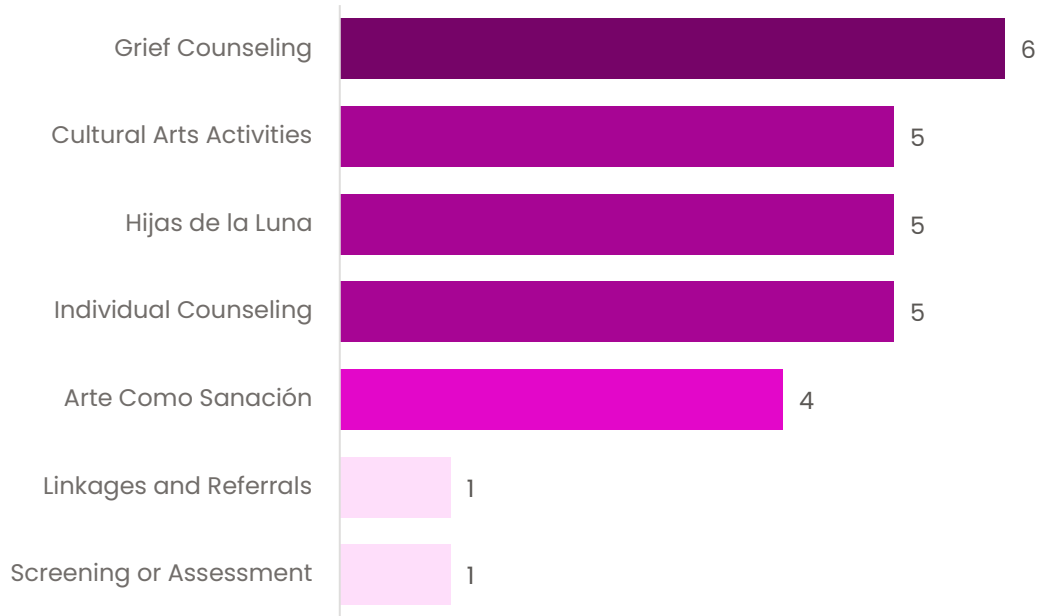
- Groups and services are **relevant to** their **culture** and **beliefs**.
- Staff connected them to **other helpful resources** and **services**.
- Groups were held at **convenient times** and locations.
- Groups were offered in their **preferred language**.



## Service Utilization

There were varied levels of engagement across Farmworker Equity Express program services, with certain offerings utilized more frequently than others (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Participant Survey Respondents' Engagement in Services, N=8



## Demographic Characteristics

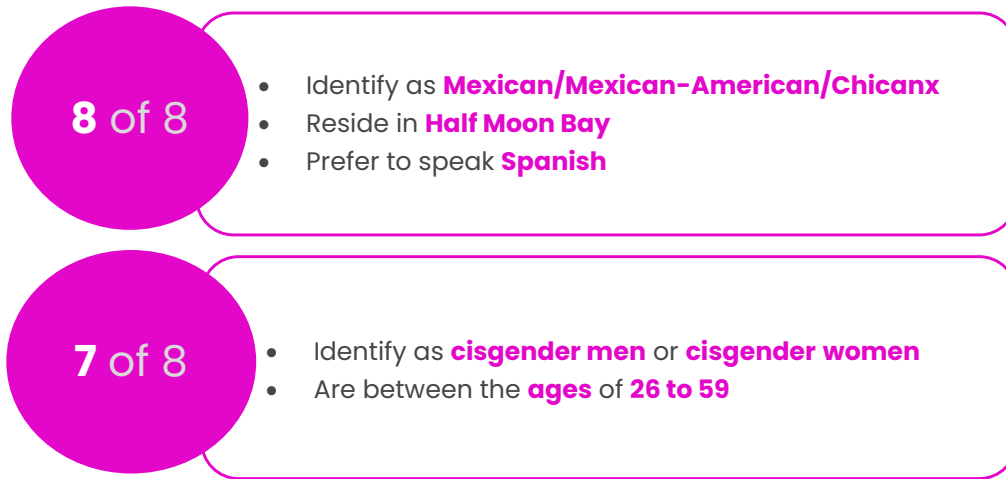
The Farmworker Equity Express program primarily served a culturally and linguistically unified group of farmworkers, reflecting a strong alignment with the community's identity.

All eight intake assessment respondents identified as Mexican, Mexican-American, or Chicanx, and all resided in Half Moon Bay. Similarly, all respondents preferred to receive services in Spanish, underscoring the importance of offering language-accessible support.

Seven out of eight respondents identified as either a cisgender man or woman, and the majority fell within the 26–59 age range (

Figure 4).

Figure 4. Demographic Characteristics of Intake Assessment Form Respondents, N=8



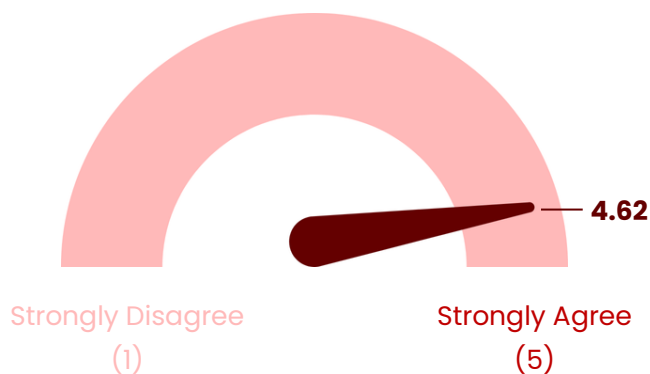
## EQ3. PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

### Behavioral Health and Quality of Life

- **Farmworker Equity Express program activities have had a positive impact on participants' behavioral health, quality of life, cultural connection, and adoption of mental health services.**
- A combination of protective factors (i.e., cultural and interactive elements such as painting, folklore dance, and grief groups) **helped reduce stress and stigma around mental health**, creating a supportive environment for emotional expression.
- Furthermore, the program's culturally integrated approach has effectively **promoted both acceptance and sustained use of behavioral health services** among the Latinx farmworker population.
- Participant survey results revealed that respondents, on average, felt very comfortable reaching out to ALAS staff for future resources and services (4.62 out of 5), with six out of eight respondents rating their comfort level a five, one rating it a four, and one a three (Figure 5).
- Half of participant survey respondents (four out of eight) specifically reported that therapy or community connections had positively impacted their mental health.
- Most participant survey **respondents expressed satisfaction** with the Farmworker Equity Express program.
- In addition, seven out of eight respondents noted **they learned something useful** through their participation in the program

**Figure 5. Participant Survey Respondents' Level of Comfort Reaching out to Staff, N=8**

On average, participant survey respondents **strongly agree** that:



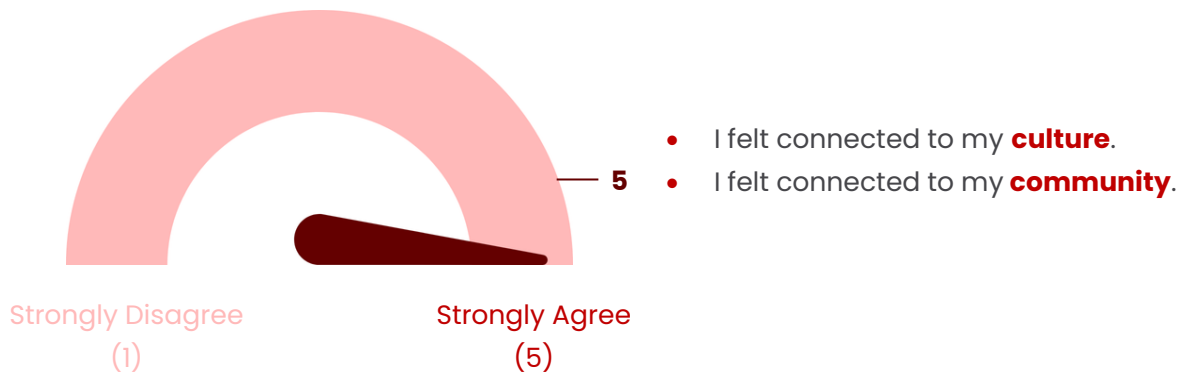
- I feel **comfortable reaching out** to ALAS staff in the future **for resources** and **services**.

## Cultural and Community Connection

- Participant survey data showed that the program significantly strengthened participants' connection to their culture and community, additional and essential protective factors (
- Figure 6).
- While program staff and cultural arts providers positively impact participants, **the participants, in turn, leave a lasting impression on the staff and providers.**

Figure 6. Participant Survey Respondents' Level of Agreement with Culture and Community, N=8

On average, participant survey respondents **strongly agree** that:

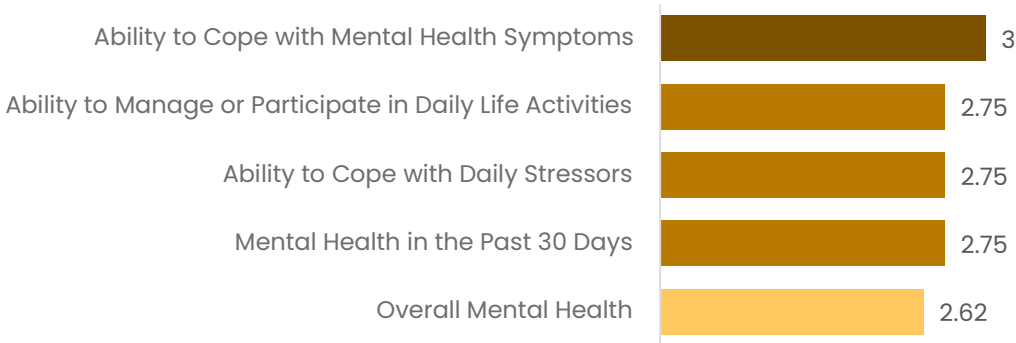


## EQ4. NEEDS AND BEST PRACTICES

Throughout the program, there were several key needs and best practices identified at intake to effectively support the behavioral health of farmworkers. Intake assessments revealed moderate challenges in mental health and daily functioning, with average self-ratings of "slightly good" for mental health in the past 30 days, overall mental health, coping with daily stressors, and ability to manage or participate in daily life activities (

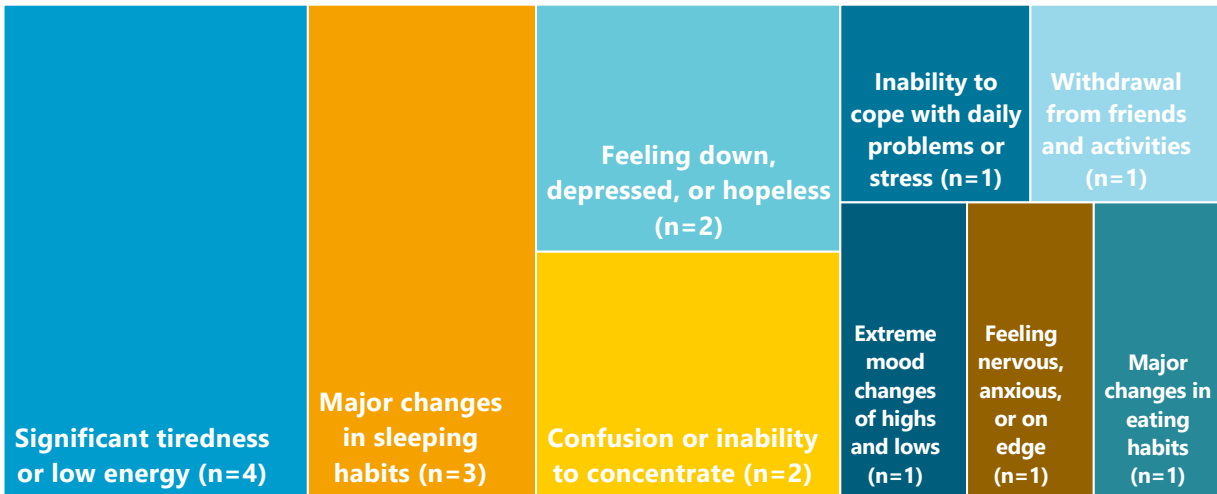
Figure 7). Meanwhile respondents' ability to cope with mental health symptoms averaged at a rating of three or "good."

**Figure 7. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Mental Health and Coping Ability Self-Ratings, N=8**



- At intake, participants reported common behavioral health symptoms, including fatigue, changes in sleep, and feelings of hopelessness (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Behavioral Health Symptoms at Intake, N=5**

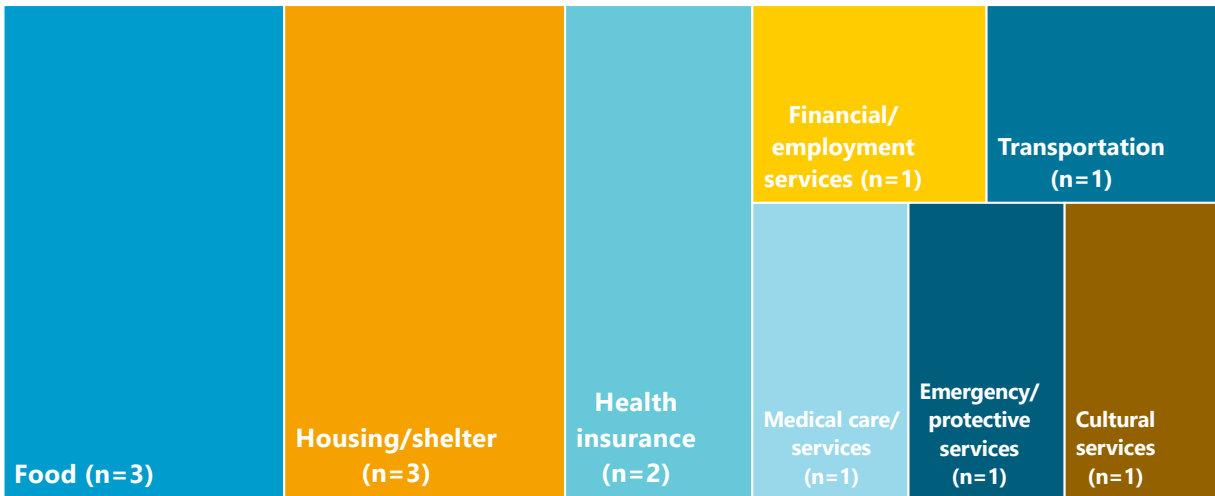


Additionally, basic supports such as food, housing, and health insurance were identified as essential to participants' mental health stability (



- Figure 9).

Figure 9. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Supports Needed at Intake, N=6



- Staff feedback emphasized the importance of language-specific services, mental health education, and trauma-informed care (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Staff-Identified Participant Needs



- Best practices included community involvement in program design, ongoing cultural competency training, and maintaining flexibility to address environmental challenges.

## Recommendations

- **Expand Awareness of Referrals and Screening Services.** Since few respondents utilized linkages, referrals, and screening services, consider enhancing communication around these offerings. Staff could integrate information about these services into existing, well-attended, sessions like grief counseling or cultural arts activities to boost awareness and understanding of the benefits they provide.
- **Promote Cross-Participation.** Encourage participants in popular groups, like Hijas de la Luna or Arte Como Sanación, to explore other services that may support their needs, such as individual counseling or assessments. A brief introduction to available services at the start or end of each group session could help participants consider other resources that might be beneficial.
- **Additional Outreach to Younger and Older Age Groups.** Since the majority of participants were between the ages of 26–59, additional outreach might help engage younger or older farmworkers who could benefit from the program. Tailoring services to the interests and needs of these age groups, such as youth-focused workshops or elder-specific support, could increase their engagement.
- **Enhance Stigma Reduction Efforts.** Building on current success, consider additional anti-stigma activities, such as storytelling or peer-led sessions, to further normalize mental health discussions within the community.
- **Evaluate Less Utilized Services.** Consider gathering feedback from participants on why services like linkages, referrals, and screenings are less utilized. This may reveal insights into possible adjustments in service delivery or indicate a need for more culturally relevant adaptations.
- **Encourage Greater Participation in Program Evaluation Activities.** Encouraging higher engagement in evaluation activities will ensure the program continues to reflect the evolving needs of the farmworker community and can support meaningful improvements based on participants' input. Additionally, exploring reasons for low participation in evaluation activities during the first year may reveal barriers that can be addressed to enhance future engagement.



# Introduction

In 2004, interest holders throughout the mental health system in California joined together in support of Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). The MHSA was intended to “expand and transform” the public mental health system according to the values of: 1) Recovery, Wellness, and Resiliency; 2) Consumer and Family Driven; 3) Community Collaboration; 4) Cultural Competency; and 5) Integrated Services. MHSA provided an infusion of funds to support programs that serve public mental health consumers, their families, and communities.

The purpose of the Innovation (INN) component of MHSA is to pilot new and emerging mental health practices and approaches that seek to address the needs of unserved and underserved populations and that contribute to learning across the state. As such, MHSA INN funds provide an opportunity for counties to implement innovative mental health services and learn about implementing practices that have the potential to transform the behavioral health system.

Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5830, all MHSA Innovation projects must meet the following requirements:

Address one of the following as its primary purpose:

- Increase access to underserved groups.
- Increase the quality of services, including measurable outcomes.
- Promote interagency and community collaboration.
- Increase access to services.

Support innovative approaches by doing one of the following:

- Introducing new mental health practices or approaches, including, but not limited to, prevention and early intervention.
- Making a change to an existing mental health practice or approach, including, but not limited to, adaptation for a new setting or community.

## INNOVATION (INN)

INN projects are new, creative mental health practices/approaches that contribute to the learning process in the mental health field. INN projects must be developed in partnership with communities through a process that is inclusive and representative, especially of unserved, underserved, and inappropriately served individuals.

- Introducing a new application to the behavioral health system of a promising community-driven practice or an approach that has been successful in non-mental health contexts or settings.

All INN projects must also be approved by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC), and counties are required to submit annual, as well as final INN Project Reports at the conclusion of the pilot. In December 2022, San Mateo County (SMC) Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) was awarded a four-year MHSOAC grant from the MHSOAC to implement their new Farmworker Equity Express Program. This report details the first fiscal year<sup>1</sup> (FY) of program implementation from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 (FY23-24).

## Program Overview

The Farmworker Equity Express program was created to address the unique challenges faced by farmworkers in SMC, a group that includes over 1,500 individuals and their families, many of whom are immigrants. These farmworkers often struggle with isolation, poor housing, and limited access to health services, contributing to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and stress. Recognizing the need for accessible and culturally responsive care, the Farmworker Equity Express brings behavioral health services directly to

the farms through a mobile bus, making it easier for farmworkers and their families to get help where they live and work. This program offers innovative care tailored to the needs of farmworkers, ensuring services are convenient, culturally relevant, and offered in Spanish.

Developed by Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS) and SMC BHRS, Farmworker Equity Express helps farmworkers overcome barriers such as transportation and language by bringing bilingual staff directly to farm locations. The mobile bus visits 23 farms in the region, providing a range of services such as counseling, recovery support, and community resources. The program also integrates cultural arts, allowing farmworkers and their families to engage in

**Photo 1. Farmworker Equity Express Bus<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> A fiscal year goes from July 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year to June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year.

<sup>2</sup> Photo Source: ALAS Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/alashmb/?hl=en>



activities like storytelling, creating altars and murals, which celebrate their heritage while promoting healing.

Through this mobile approach, the Farmworker Equity Express connects Latinx farmworkers and their families with much-needed mental health support in a setting that is familiar and welcoming, helping to build stronger, healthier communities. It represents a new way of delivering care by meeting people where they are and honoring their cultural identity, making a lasting impact on the well-being of farmworkers and their families.

## Program Innovations and Adaptations

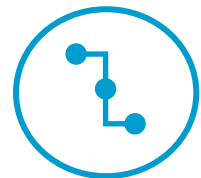
**Program Launch.** ALAS intended to launch the Farmworker Equity Express program in July 2023; however, due to delays in contracting approval on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, the program ultimately launched in August 2023.



**Evaluation Processes.** ALAS and RDA held a launch meeting for the MHSA program evaluation in July 2023 and collaboratively participated in a series of culturally responsive evaluation planning sessions that took place in August, September, and October 2023. The teams continued to collaborate to develop data collection tools, train staff, and collect and analyze data for the first annual MHSA evaluation report (for additional details, see **'Evaluation Overview'**). Staff reported using the focus groups as opportunities to implement program changes in response to direct feedback from program participants (e.g., providing mobile outreach to less-visited farms).



**Referral Pipeline.** In the Fall of 2023, ALAS began solidifying plans to use their monthly thematic workshops as a pipeline for initial client engagement and connection to other program services, such as individual therapy. The team worked to finalize a protocol for their referral and tracking system in December 2023. In May 2024, ALAS began piloting drop-in crisis hours for participants, both on the mobile services bus and onsite at ALAS, as another method of engaging and enrolling new farmworkers. The following month, ALAS found that their food pantry program was growing as a successful initial entry point for farmworkers to learn about the program, connect with a case manager, and obtain mental health referrals.



**Service Developments.** ALAS began thinking through ideas for mental health service offerings and engagement approaches, including ideas that incorporated mental health de-stigmatization and the arts. The team launched several new service groups and offerings between the Fall of 2023 and the Spring of 2024, including: Asesoría individual (individual counseling), Asesoría grupal (group counseling), Exploración o evaluación (screening or assessment),



Actividades artísticas culturales (cultural arts activities), Arte como Sanación (Art as a Form of Healing group), Grupos Compadres (Friends group), Grupos Corazones de Oro (Hearts of Gold group), Taller/grupo de parejas (Couples group), Hijas de la Luna (Daughters of the Moon group), Aprendiendo y jugando (Learning and Playing group), Reinas de Corazones (Queen of Hearts group), Grupos de madres "Bebé y yo" ("Baby and Me" group), and Talleres sobre el duelo (Grief workshops). Throughout the first program year, ALAS provided trainings to staff and supported delineation of ALAS services specific to Farmworker Equity Express versus other ALAS programs.

**Mobile Service Engagement.** Throughout the Fall and Winter of 2023, ALAS worked to plan and finalize the logistics and paperwork needed to launch the mobile services bus to provide in-the-field services to farmworkers in their communities. However, complications with the mobile services bus, coupled with numerous storms and flooding throughout the Winter and Spring, ruined crops and roughened the unpaved terrain, which made it difficult both (1) for farmworkers to find work and (2) for the program to reach farmworkers using the mobile services bus. During this period, ALAS staff creatively adapted to the situation by using a truck to provide in-the-field services, until the mobile services bus began running again in May 2024.



**Community Engagement.** ALAS engaged current and new program participants at a variety of social and community events throughout FY 23-24. Some of these events began in the Fall of 2023, such as monthly breakfast socials, the Half Moon Bay Pumpkin Festival. Other events took place in the Spring and Summer of 2024, including Wellness Day at the park, county fair events, and ALAS's 10-year anniversary gala. The community also held a memorial service in January 2024 for the victims of a mass shooting in Half Moon Bay that occurred the year prior. Additionally, ALAS attended a meeting with the housing commission regarding the "555 Kelly" city housing project in April 2024<sup>3</sup>, with many senior farmworkers in attendance to share their stories and advocate that the 555 Kelly property be used as housing for senior farmworkers. The following month in May, ALAS learned that the 555 Kelly housing project was approved as housing for farmworkers.



**Advisory Board Development.** ALAS experienced some delays in developing and convening a community advisory board. The team spent the Fall of 2023 working to identify key leaders from the farmworker community for the board. In October 2023, RDA engaged in discussions and shared a resource guide with ALAS to help support the development of their advisory board. After



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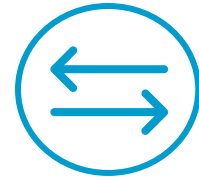
<sup>3</sup> City of Half Moon Bay. (n.d.). 555 Kelly Avenue - Affordable Housing. <https://www.half-moon-bay.ca.us/845/555-Kelly-Avenue---Affordable-Housing>





months of diligent recruitment and planning, the program’s first community advisory board meeting took place in May 2024.

**Staff Transitions.** ALAS experienced a few staffing transitions during their first year of implementation for the Farmworker Equity Express program. In February 2024, the team welcomed a new program director to the program. In the Spring of 2024, ALAS underwent an operations office restructuring that led to a staff transition for the team’s original assistant director to a community liaison role.



A table with additional program implementation details may be found in **Appendix A**.

## Evaluation Overview

In July 2023, ALAS and SMC BHRS partnered with RDA Consulting<sup>4</sup> (hereafter evaluation team) to conduct a multi-year evaluation of the Farmworker Equity Express program, concluding in 2026. The purpose of this evaluation is to: (1) evaluate Farmworker Equity Express program processes (implementation) and outcomes; (2) support continuous program improvement efforts; and (3) satisfy and comply with MHSA INN regulatory requirements, including annual and final evaluation reports to the MHSOAC.

Since starting the evaluation of the Farmworker Equity Express program in July 2023, the evaluation team has worked closely with ALAS and SMC BHRS to accomplish several key evaluation activities:



**Developed an Evaluation Plan.** In partnership with ALAS, the evaluation team developed an evaluation plan that is intended to be used as a roadmap throughout the evaluation process. This plan is inclusive of the learning goals, evaluation questions, the proposed evaluation methodology and analytic framework, potential limitations, and reporting requirements.



**Created and Adapted Data Collection Tools.** Collaboratively, ALAS and the evaluation team created data collection tools such as focus group protocols and an observation checklist. Moreover, the evaluation team worked with ALAS to adapt existing data collection tools such as a participant survey, intake assessment form, and service log.

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<sup>4</sup> RDA is an employee-owned consulting firm that provides equity-centered, evidence-driven solutions in collaboration with our partners to improve social systems and services.



**Focus Group Training.** To best meet the needs of program participants and enhance program staff evaluation skills, the evaluation team designed a focus group training for program staff interested in assisting with focus group facilitation. These staff were provided a stipend. Trained program staff facilitated the program participant and cultural arts provider focus groups.



**Site Observation.** ALAS invited the evaluation team to visit the program site to observe the art group, “Arte Como Sanación,” and learn more about the program’s activities. This opportunity allowed for the evaluation team to immerse themselves in a day of program activities to gain a glimpse into how participants experience the program.



**Fiscal Year 1 Data Collection.** Data collection for the first year of reporting was a collaborative effort. Described in greater detail below, the evaluation team facilitated the program staff focus group, meanwhile the ALAS team helped to facilitate the program participant and cultural art provider focus groups. ALAS also administered the participant surveys and intake assessment forms.



**Fiscal Year 1 Data Analysis.** To inform this report, the evaluation team analyzed the data collected in the first FY of the program. This includes data gathered from the focus groups, participant surveys, and intake assessment forms. Together, the evaluation team and ALAS made sense of the findings during a virtual data party. During the data party, ALAS provided the evaluation team with additional insights to help inform data interpretation.

Throughout this partnership, the evaluation team also held regular monthly meetings with ALAS and SMC BHRS to stay updated on the program’s progress, discuss any new developments, and share evaluation progress. These ongoing meetings will continue to ensure the evaluation remains on track and that the findings are used to support the program’s growth and success. Collectively, these efforts have laid the groundwork for an evaluation that will help to answer key questions about how the program is working and the impact it is having on the program participants. The following section outlines the specific evaluation questions guiding this work.

## Evaluation Questions

In alignment with the program’s learning goals, the evaluation team, ALAS, and SMC BHRS developed a set of four evaluation questions (EQs) to guide the assessment of the Farmworker Equity Express program. The EQs aim to explore how well the program is meeting its goals and how it can continue to improve. By answering these questions, interest holders can gain a clearer picture of the program’s contributions to farmworker behavioral health and well-being.

The four EQs and their associated learning goals are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Evaluation Questions and Associated Learning Goals**

Evaluation Questions and Learning Goals	
<b>EQ1.</b> How is the Farmworker Equity Express <b>program being implemented</b> over time?	
<b>Learning Goal (EQ1):</b> To assess and improve the implementation of the Farmworker Equity Express program to ensure it effectively meets participant needs, fosters collaboration, and delivers quality services.	
<b>EQ2.</b> To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program, a culturally responsive mobile behavioral health resource, <b>expand access to and utilization of behavioral health services</b> in the Latinx farmworker community?	
<b>Learning Goal (EQ2):</b> To determine the extent to which the Farmworker Equity Express program enhances access to and utilization of behavioral health services among the Latinx farmworker community, while reducing stigma and increasing awareness of available resources.	
<b>EQ3.</b> To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program, an integrated approach using cultural arts and formal clinical services, <b>support behavioral health service adoption and outcomes</b> among the Latinx farmworker community?	
<b>Learning Goal (EQ3):</b> To examine the extent to which the Farmworker Equity Express program improves behavioral health service adoption and outcomes within the Latinx farmworker community, integrating cultural arts activities with formal clinical services, ultimately improving mental and behavioral health along with quality of life.	
<b>EQ4.</b> To what extent does the Farmworker Equity Express program <b>identify the needs and best practices</b> to support farmworker behavioral health?	
<b>Learning Goal (EQ4):</b> To identify and document the needs, best practices, and lessons learned from the Farmworker Equity Express program, ensuring its adaptability for replication and scaling in other counties implementing similar programs to better support farmworker behavioral health.	

## Methodology

For the evaluation of the Farmworker Equity Express program, the evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (stories

and experiences) data to provide a holistic view of the program. This method ensured that the evaluation team addressed SMC BHRS and ALAS priorities, answered key evaluation questions, and met MHSa INN reporting requirements. The annual evaluation report includes information about how the program was put into action, how participants engaged with services, and the short-term outcomes achieved during FY23–24.

As detailed in the **'Evaluation Overview'** above, the evaluation team used a collaborative and culturally responsive evaluation approach that engaged key interest holders, such as the ALAS team and the farmworker community, and centered their voices throughout the evaluation process. To ensure the farmworker community voice was represented, in September 2024, the ALAS team coordinated and convened the Community Advisory Board (CAB)—comprised of six farmworkers and six ALAS staff. Their feedback and input were pivotal in creating a collaborative and culturally responsive evaluation that reflects the unique needs of the community. For example, the CAB reviewed the participant survey to ensure it was accessible, respectful, and culturally appropriate. Moreover, the evaluation team and ALAS held an additional data party with the CAB members to help interpret findings and add context to the data collected. While the CAB is still in its early convening phases, the evaluation team and ALAS will continue to engage members throughout the evaluation process.

This approach laid a strong foundation for the manner in which the findings are reflected in this report. The next section outlines the specific data sources and collection methods the evaluation team used to gather information for the evaluation.

## Data Collection and Sources

As part of the evaluation planning process, the evaluation team, SMC BHRS, and ALAS collaborated to identify and discuss needed and existing qualitative and quantitative data sources that could be used to address the EQs for FY23–24 reporting. **Appendix B** provides a detailed overview of the learning goals, evaluation questions, the indicators and measures, and the data sources used for this evaluation.

### Data Sources

#### Quantitative Data

**Participant Survey.** In collaboration with ALAS, the evaluation team adapted an existing participant survey from a similar program<sup>5</sup> to understand participants' experiences with services received from the Farmworker Equity Express program as well as other activities participants engaged in. The information gathered from the 9-item participant survey included the length of time participants engaged in Farmworker Equity Express services, the

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<sup>5</sup> ALAS Cariño Project.

groups participated in, the services received, experiences with mental health-related groups, workshops, or other events, experiences with participation in groups and services, and program satisfaction. Participants were also asked self-stigma questions. In addition, the survey provided the opportunity for participants to share any learnings from program services and/or activities, general feedback about the program, along with optional demographic information. In June 2024, ALAS administered the survey to participants after engagement in services, groups, workshops, and other activities. The survey was confidential and voluntary. The evaluation team provided incentives to the program participants who completed the survey. There were eight (N=8) farmworkers who participated in the survey.

**Intake Assessment Form.** In June 2024, ALAS provided the evaluation team with data captured in the intake assessment form. ALAS staff administered this form to all program participants at intake in-person and in paper format. The intake assessment form included four core questions that gathered information around participants' overall mental health as well as self-rated physical and mental health, and ability to: manage symptoms, cope with stressors, and engage in daily life. Similarly to the survey, there were eight (N=8) farmworkers who completed an intake assessment form.

The participant survey and intake assessment form were made accessible to program participants in both English and Spanish. ALAS administered both in-person and in paper format to ensure ease of access. To maintain data security, ALAS staff scanned and securely transferred the completed surveys and assessment forms to the evaluation team, where they were entered into designated Google Forms in a protected folder for analysis.

## Qualitative Data

**Focus Groups.** To address all four EQs, the evaluation team facilitated three focus groups, including one focus group with program participants, one focus group with ALAS staff, and one focus group with the cultural arts provider. Each focus group was tailored to gather unique insights from each group based on their position within the context of the Farmworkers Equity Express program. All focus groups were held in-person and onsite for approximately 90 minutes each. Evaluation team members facilitated the ALAS staff focus group meanwhile two trained ALAS staff conducted the program participant and cultural art provider focus groups. The evaluation team developed all protocols for the focus groups with input from ALAS staff. In addition, the evaluation team provided incentives to the program participants who participated in the focus groups.

**The focus group with program participants** involved discussions of program access, engagement, and impact; program satisfaction and perceived responsiveness; mental and behavioral health service access, awareness, knowledge, and stigma reduction; as well as the nature of outcomes experienced, including those related to behavioral health, mental

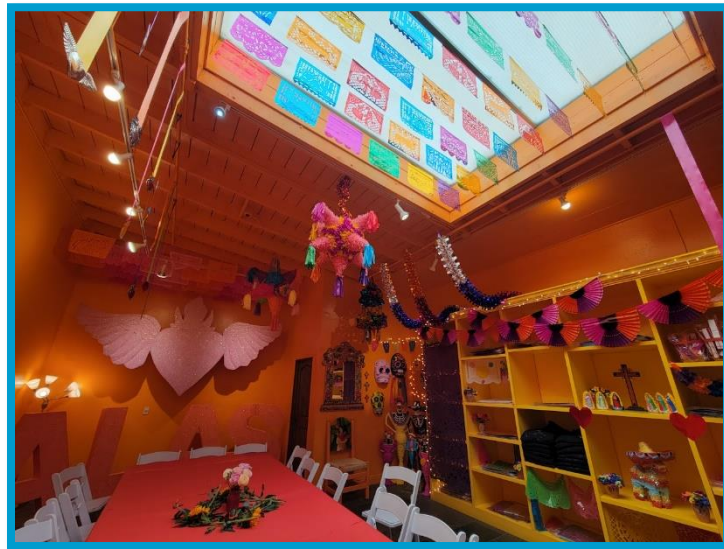
health, and quality of life. There were five (N=5) farmworkers who participated in the focus group.

**The focus groups with ALAS staff** included discussions of program implementation, successes, challenges, and adaptations; internal and external collaborations; staff support and satisfaction; cultural responsiveness of the program; perceptions of program access and impact; service adoption and outcomes; and behavioral health needs along with best practices for participant behavioral health support. There were five (N=5) staff members who participated in the focus group.

**The focus group with the cultural arts provider** delved into perspectives on program implementation; cultural responsiveness; collaboration with program staff; participants' engagement and satisfaction with cultural arts activities; and the impact of these activities on participants' outcomes. There were ten (N=10) cultural arts providers who participated in the focus group.

**Program Observation.** In its first year of implementation, the evaluation team conducted a program observation of the Farmworker Equity Express program. The program observation took place in-person and onsite. During observation, ALAS staff provided the evaluation team with a walkthrough of the program and the services it offers. Furthermore, this mode of data collection allowed for the evaluation team to facilitate the in-person focus group with staff members, as well as provided the evaluation team with the opportunity to train two ALAS staff in focus group facilitation. This observation contributed to the first EQ, which encompasses program implementation successes, challenges, and adaptations, the dynamics of internal and external collaborations, staff support and satisfaction levels, along with the cultural responsiveness of the program.

**Photo 2. ALAS Activity Room<sup>6</sup>**



**Evaluation Meeting Documentation.** Evaluation team members utilized monthly evaluation meetings with ALAS as an opportunity to make additional observations of the Farmworker Equity Express program. These meetings allowed the evaluation team to document how the

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<sup>6</sup> Photo Source: Evaluation team observation photo of Arte Como Sanación.



program is being implemented over time and to what extent the program is identifying needs and best practices to support participants. The evaluation team documented these additional observations through meeting notes and used a portion of these meetings to gather program updates from ALAS which entailed information on program implementation, its successes, challenges, adaptations, as well as best practices and lessons learned. These meetings were held virtually for up to one hour.

## Data Analysis

As detailed in the **'Methodology'** section above, the evaluation team conducted a mixed-methods evaluation using qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques that helped to evaluate the program processes and outcomes. By conducting both qualitative and quantitative analysis, there was an opportunity to triangulate findings from multiple data sources—and data types—to produce a more robust set of findings that complement and build upon each other.

Separate analytic approaches were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data. To assess measures from the **quantitative data sources** listed above, the evaluation team utilized Microsoft Excel to calculate descriptive statistics such as basic frequencies and averages, such as the number and demographics of those served, the type and number of services rendered, and the number of participants served by the program, among many others.<sup>7</sup> Data gathered from the **qualitative data sources**, including portions from the intake assessment form and survey, were analyzed using a systematic approach. Responses were transcribed, reviewed, and thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes and key takeaways that informed the evaluation questions.

To further bolster the findings, the evaluation team took a collaborative approach by not only analyzing the data but also hosting a virtual data party with the ALAS team. This data party provided a platform to present the initial findings, encouraging open discussion and feedback. The evaluation team invited the ALAS team to share their perspectives, offer additional context, and ensure that the interpretations were both accurate and culturally appropriate. These discussions were crucial, as they not only validated the findings but also added depth and nuance to the analysis. The insights gathered from this engagement were directly incorporated into the final findings and this report, ensuring that the results were reflective of the ALAS team's and program participants' expertise and experience.

## Limitations

Like any real-world program, there are natural limitations to collecting and analyzing data. While this report provides a snapshot of the experiences of farmworkers who participated in the Farmworker Equity Express program, the following limitations should be kept in mind when

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<sup>7</sup> See **Appendix B** for more information on additional data measures.



reviewing the findings. First, **not every participant completed the survey or joined the focus group**, meaning only a portion of feedback was gathered from those engaged with the program. For example, although eight farmworkers responded to the survey, more were involved in the program. Similarly, only eight farmworkers completed the intake assessment form, so the results might not fully represent everyone's experiences. Furthermore, the evaluation team was **unable to match data** across the datasets as there were different unique identification numbers provided in both datasets, making it challenging to understand participants' trajectory throughout the program. Additionally, **nonresponse bias** should be considered, as those who chose not to participate in the survey or focus group may have different perspectives or experiences from those who did, potentially impacting the overall findings. Additionally, because participation in the surveys was voluntary, there is the possibility of **self-selection bias**—those with particularly strong opinions, whether positive or negative, may have been more likely to participate. This could skew the results and overrepresent certain views. **Self-report bias** is also a consideration, as participants may unintentionally misrepresent their experiences, either by exaggerating or downplaying them. Another factor is **social desirability bias**, where respondents might have felt the need to provide responses they believed were more favorable or acceptable, rather than being fully candid. For example, some participants may have spoken more positively about the program than they truly felt, especially if they were reluctant to express criticism. **Recall bias** could also affect the findings, as participants were asked to reflect on past experiences, and their memories may not always be precise, especially for events that took place earlier in the year.

**Limited access to data** also posed a challenge, as not all requested data was provided, limiting the evaluation team's ability to triangulate findings and present a more robust view of farmworkers' experiences throughout the program. Furthermore, while the survey was offered in both English and Spanish, farmworkers who completed the survey in Spanish found the **self-stigma portion difficult to understand**, describing the Likert scale statements as confusing. As a result, the data from this section was incomplete for nearly all participants and was excluded from the evaluation. It is also important to note that throughout the findings, frequencies are used to present most of the quantitative data, such as demographic characteristics and services accessed, while averages are reported for Likert scale responses. This approach was chosen to provide a clear, accurate interpretation of the results given the **small sample size**, avoiding percentages to prevent any potential misrepresentation.

Despite these limitations, the feedback collected can help guide ALAS in refining its programming to better serve farmworkers, their families, and the broader community moving forward.



## Evaluation Findings

The upcoming section shares what the evaluation unveiled in response to the evaluation questions (EQs) outlined above (see ‘**Evaluation Questions**’ for more information). Findings are presented in a way that clearly address each question, making it easier to understand the impact the Farmworker Equity Express program has on participants in its first year of implementation. Specifically, each part of the following section is dedicated to one of the EQs: program implementation, access to services, participant outcomes, in addition to needs and best practices. It is important to note that the EQs are not mutually exclusive as findings from one area can often inform another, providing a more interconnected understanding of the program. This approach helps to give a more holistic view of the program and how its meeting the needs of program participants as well as where there may be opportunities for growth.

**Photo 3. Depiction of Farmworker Equity Express Bus<sup>8</sup>**



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<sup>8</sup> Photo Source: ALAS Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/alashmb/?hl=en>

# EQ1. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION



This section highlights the Farmworker Equity Express program's first year of implementation, showcasing its adaptability, cultural responsiveness, and role as both a behavioral health resource and community support. It also details key services and challenges related to implementation.

## EQ1. HOW IS THE FARMWORKER EQUITY EXPRESS PROGRAM BEING IMPLEMENTED OVER TIME?

### Program Offerings

**In its first year, the Farmworker Equity Express program was flexible, responsive, accessible, and culturally grounded, adapting to and meeting the unique needs of farmworkers while emphasizing cultural relevance.** Of the eight survey respondents, five reported connecting to ALAS services directly through the mobile bus, highlighting the program's ability to serve a dual purpose: (1) key

**Photo 4. Pescadero Farm Food Distribution<sup>10</sup>**



community resource

and (2) critical behavioral health service (Figure 11). Building on the resources and knowledge from other ALAS programs, as well as being responsive to the needs of farmworkers, the Farmworker Equity Express program offered a multitude of services to farmworker participants, including a variety of groups, workshops, and classes. Beginning with the Talleres Sobre el Duelo (grief workshops) in October 2023, the program continued to develop and expand service offerings throughout its first year of implementation, such as asesoría individual (individual counseling), asesoría grupal (group counseling), exploración o evaluación (screening or

**Figure 11. Survey Respondents' Connection to ALAS Services<sup>9</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Photo Source: ALAS Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/alashmb/?hl=en>

assessment), actividades artísticas culturales (cultural arts activities), Arte como Sanación (Art as a Form of Healing group), Grupos Compadres (Friends group), Grupos Corazones de Oro (Hearts of Gold group), Taller/grupo de parejas (Couples group), Hijas de la Luna (Daughters of the Moon group), Aprendiendo y jugando (Learning and Playing group), Reinas de Corazones (Queen of Hearts group), Grupos de madres "Bebé y yo" ("Baby and Me" group). In addition, the program offered referrals to other services, field trips (e.g., Alcatraz), advocacy in the community (e.g., 555 Kelly), and provided basic needs services (e.g., food pantry) (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Farmworker Equity Express Key Services**



## Program Implementation Strengths

### The Farmworker Equity Express program showcased multiple strengths in its implementation.

A core strength of the program was its commitment to meet farmworkers' needs flexibly, often adapting service hours, locations, and offerings based on feedback from participants and staff. As a result, engagement in the program increased, as farmworkers from outside the program's network came to the mobile bus to access services. In addition, the mobile bus was creatively used for various activities, from hosting group therapy on the beach to organizing field trips for farmworkers from the older adult population. This

integration of familiar and comforting settings made it easier for participants to engage. Additionally, when unexpected events like storms or incidents of community violence occurred, program

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"We meet the needs of the community and adapt quickly."

- Focus Group Participant (ALAS Staff)

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staff responded promptly with disaster relief services, offering crisis support, transportation,

and food aid. One participant shared, ***“When the shooting occurred, they were the first to come to provide aid.”*** This illustrates the program’s commitment to rapid crisis response, which helped to build trust within the farmworker community. Moreover, the program’s emphasis on cultural elements, like folklore dance and traditional storytelling, made participants feel understood and supported, aligning services with their cultural values and needs.

## Program Implementation Opportunities for Growth

While the program demonstrated notable strengths in its culturally responsive, adaptable approach to service delivery, it also faced challenges in meeting the diverse needs of the farmworker community. At times, resource limitations prevented program staff from providing all items requested by farmworkers during mobile outreach. As such, program staff reported that partnerships with external partners became pivotal for sustaining the program, helping to supply necessary resources and expanding the program’s reach. Environmental challenges, such as harsh winter storms and flooding, further complicated the program’s ability to provide mobile services. These conditions not only damaged crops and worsened unpaved roads, making it difficult for farmworkers to work, but also made it challenging for the program’s mobile bus to reach some remote areas. Despite this, program staff worked to adapt and overcome the situation by using a truck to provide in-the-field services until the mobile bus could be used again.

**Photo 5. Farmworker Equity Express Bus<sup>11</sup>**



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<sup>11</sup> Photo Source: ALAS Instagram – <https://www.instagram.com/alashmb/?hl=en>

## EQ2. ACCESS TO SERVICES



The following section provides a detailed overview of respondents' engagement with the Farmworker Equity Express program, including their experiences accessing and utilizing services, levels of service utilization, and the program's reach within the community.

### **EQ2. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE FARMWORKER EQUITY EXPRESS PROGRAM, A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MOBILE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCE, EXPAND ACCESS TO AND UTILIZATION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE LATINX FARMWORKER COMMUNITY?**

#### **Program Engagement**

Throughout the first year of implementation, **the Farmworker Equity Express program made significant strides in breaking down barriers to behavioral health care, effectively expanding farmworkers' access to and utilization of behavioral health services.** By incorporating the mobile bus, the program reduced common barriers such as transportation, cost, and time, making it easier for farmworkers to engage in the services offered.

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"The bus brings mental health services to those that can't come to the ALAS office. We're able to go to them."

- Focus Group Participant  
(ALAS Staff)

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"[This program], it helps you become aware that [mental health] is very important to take care of."

- Focus Group Participant (Farmworker)

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**Culturally relevant activities and an emphasis on relationship-building were also key program elements that influenced how farmworkers engaged with services.** Together, the

mobile bus, culturally-tailored services, and focus on relationships, helped program participants to feel understood and valued, creating an environment where participants were comfortable sharing sensitive information related to their mental and behavioral health—topics they were not accustomed to speak about. One farmworker focus group participant shared that, in the Latinx culture, people are often encouraged to ignore feelings like sadness unless there is physical pain, but through this program, they realized the importance of caring for their mental health as much as their physical health. Similarly, another farmworker focus group participant pointed out how the program has helped them to talk about their trauma.

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“...We all carry some trauma inside of us or something that is good for us to talk about and they have helped me a lot in doing that.”

- Focus Group Participant  
(Farmworker)

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## Program Awareness

Initially, farmworkers were not fully aware of the mobile bus's purpose or the services it provided. In response, program staff organized a welcoming event, inviting farmworkers to a get-together with music, food, and activities to introduce the bus and explain its offerings. This gathering not only clarified the bus's role but also further strengthened farmworkers' trust and interest in the services. To further enhance service accessibility, the mobile bus also offered telehealth services and educational activities, broadening the ways farmworkers could engage with these services.

## Service Accessibility

**The Farmworker Equity Express program prioritized accessibility by ensuring services were culturally responsive, resource-oriented, and conveniently delivered.** On average,<sup>12</sup> participant survey respondents strongly agreed (4.75 out of 5) that the program's groups and services aligned well with their cultural beliefs and values, with seven out of eight respondents rating this aspect a five, and only one rating it a three (Figure 13). Additionally, respondents felt well-supported (4.75 out of 5) by staff, with six out of seven respondents indicating that staff connected them to other helpful resources and services, with six respondents giving a rating of five and one respondent rating it at three. The program's

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<sup>12</sup> The ratings are based on a five-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree.



scheduling and locations were also appreciated, as respondents reported that the groups were held at times and places that fit well with their availability; seven out of eight respondents rated this a five, with one rating it a three. Language accessibility was another key strength, with all eight respondents agreeing that services were offered in their preferred language, predominantly Spanish, and seven respondents rating this a five and one respondent rating it a three. These findings reflect the program’s dedication to making behavioral health services accessible and responsive to the specific needs and cultural backgrounds of the farmworker community.

**Figure 13. Participant Survey Respondents' Experiences with Service Accessibility,**  
April–June 2024, N=8<sup>13</sup>



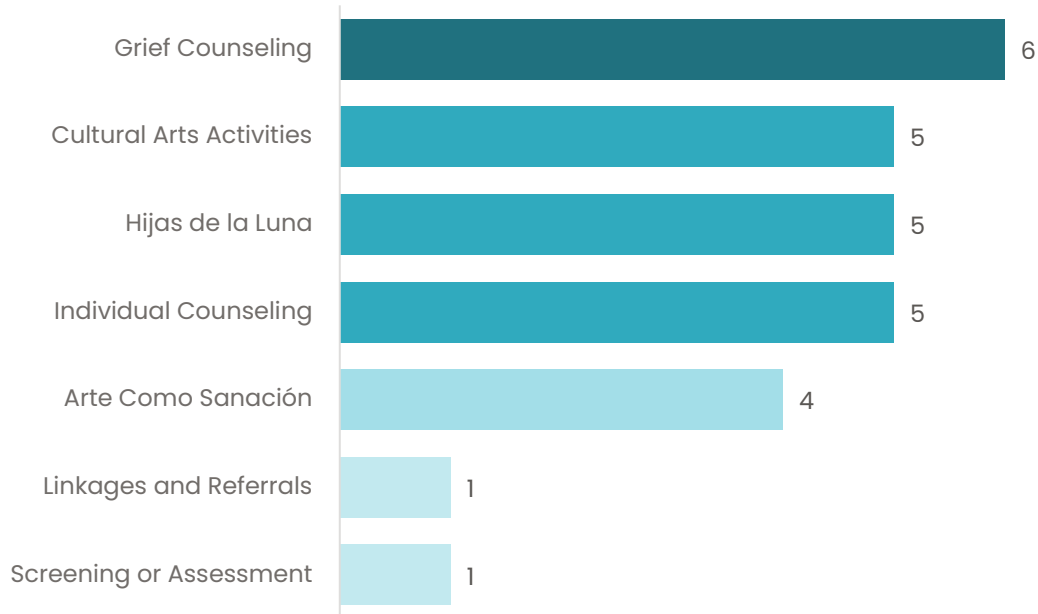
## Service Utilization

**There were varied levels of engagement across Farmworker Equity Express program services, with certain offerings utilized more frequently than others.** Among the eight survey respondents, grief counseling emerged as the most widely accessed service, with six respondents indicating they used it. Cultural arts activities, Hijas de la Luna, and individual counseling were also popular, with five respondents selecting each of these as services they engaged with regularly. Less than five respondents (<5) participated in Arte Como Sanación (four respondents), linkages and referrals (one respondent), as well as screening and

<sup>13</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024.

assessment services (one respondent). These findings suggest that the program’s services that are responsive to the needs of the farmworker community and culturally relevant may be more familiar to the farmworker community. Thus, more awareness of the less utilized services may be needed.

**Figure 14. Participant Survey Respondents' Utilization of Services, April-June 2024, N=8<sup>14</sup>**



## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic data helps identify whether the program is effectively reaching its target population, Latinx farmworkers, and allows program staff to make adjustments to better serve underrepresented groups. Additionally, this information ensures that Farmworker Equity Express’s culturally grounded programming resonates with the diverse identities within the Latinx community. By continuing to check in with the demographics of those that are engaging with the program, program staff can ensure that they are continuing to seek out new voices, unique points of view, and members from all corners and facets of the community to continue to enrich and grow the Farmworker Equity Express.

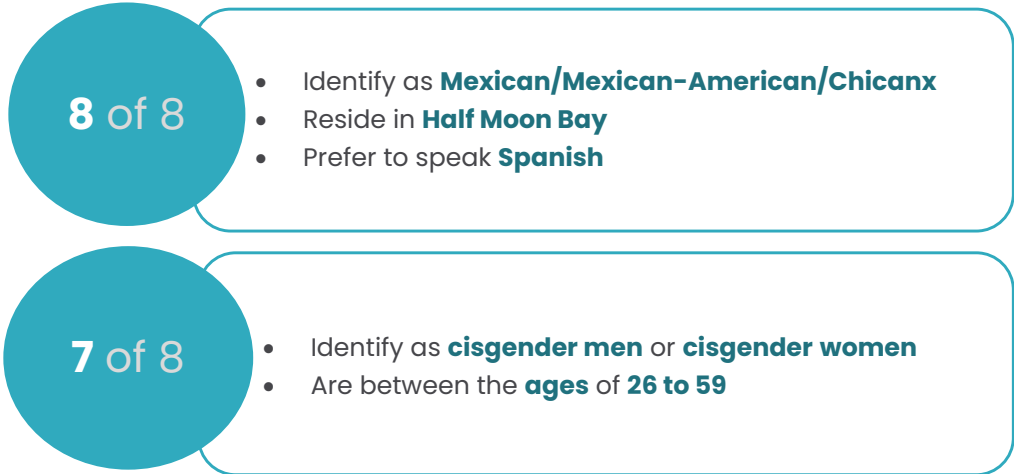
**The Farmworker Equity Express program primarily served a culturally and linguistically unified group of farmworkers, reflecting a strong alignment with the community’s identity.**

All eight intake assessment respondents identified as Mexican, Mexican-American, or Chicax, and all resided in Half Moon Bay. Similarly, all respondents preferred to receive services in Spanish, underscoring the importance of offering language-accessible support.

<sup>14</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024. It is important to note that survey respondents were able to select more than one service.

Seven out of eight identified as either a cisgender man or woman, and the majority fell within the 26–59 age range. These demographics may indicate that the program is reaching a significant segment of the farmworker community in Half Moon Bay, particularly those who identify closely with Latinx and Mexican cultural backgrounds.

**Figure 15. Demographic Characteristics of Intake Assessment Form Respondents,**  
April–June 2024, N=8<sup>15</sup>



<sup>15</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

## EQ3. PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES



The following section examines how the Farmworker Equity Express program, through its integration of cultural arts and formal clinical services, supports behavioral health service adoption and enhances outcomes among the Latinx farmworker community. It explores improvements in participants' behavioral health, quality of life, cultural and community connections, and highlights the mutual impact between program staff and participants.

### **EQ3. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE FARMWORKER EQUITY EXPRESS PROGRAM, AN INTEGRATED APPROACH USING CULTURAL ARTS AND FORMAL CLINICAL SERVICES, SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE ADOPTION AND OUTCOMES AMONG THE LATINX FARMWORKER COMMUNITY?**

#### **Behavioral Health and Quality of Life**

**Farmworker Equity Express program activities have made a positive impact on participants' behavioral health, quality of life, cultural connection, and adoption of mental health services – all essential protective factors.** Focus group discussions with program participants and staff revealed perceived and observed improvements in participants' emotional wellbeing, trust, and coping skills. Groups like *Corazones de Oro* and *Reinas de Corazones* provided safe spaces for discussing sensitive mental health issues, helping to cultivate trust and a sense of security among participants. Additionally, cultural activities, such as Mariachi sessions and Mexican dance classes, helped participants reconnect with their heritage, making them feel understood, comfortable, and valued. This combination of cultural and interactive elements such as painting, folklore dance, and grief groups helped reduce stress and stigma around mental health, creating a supportive environment for emotional expression. For example, including games like Loteria and Jenga helped to promote emotional expression, built trust, and improved

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“...the game of Loteria...something I grew up with, and they grew up with...how important that game is rooted in culture and their upbringing, great to see them be themselves.”

– Focus Group Participant  
(Cultural Arts Provider)

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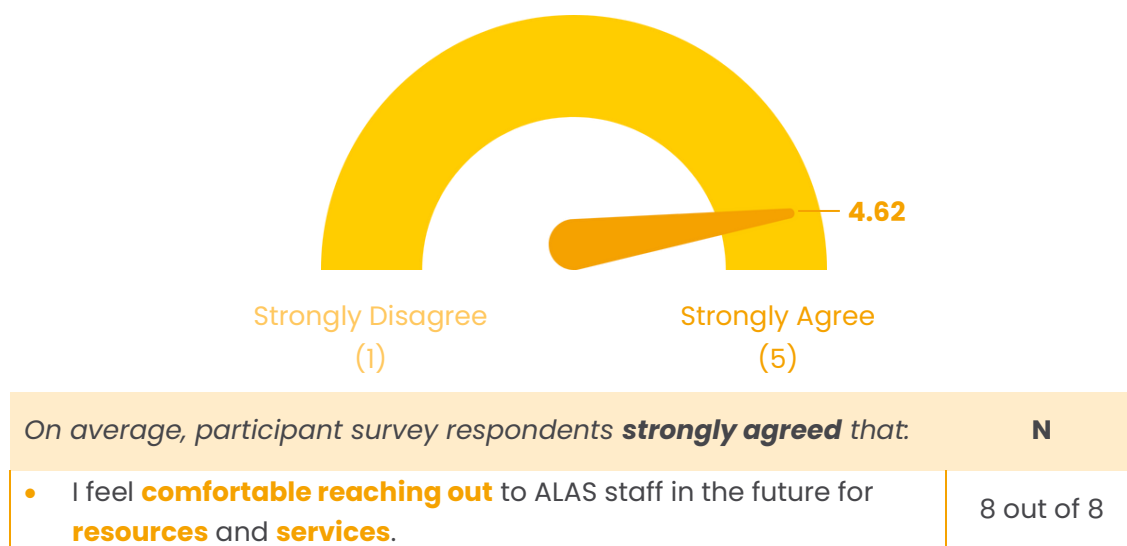
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participation, further enhancing engagement, with one program staff focus group participant reflecting on these activities, sharing. Many participants reported that mobile outreach and consistent support from staff helped them manage trauma and develop coping skills, further enhancing their quality of life.

**Furthermore, the program’s culturally integrated approach has effectively promoted both acceptance and sustained use of behavioral health services among the Latinx farmworker population.**

Participant survey results revealed that respondents, on average, felt very comfortable reaching out to ALAS staff for future resources and services, with six out of eight respondents rating their comfort level a five, one rating it a four, and one a three (Figure 16). This comfort level, built through culturally tailored activities and trust-building efforts, has led respondents to engage with services they might otherwise avoid. In focus groups, participants shared that the program’s supportive environment helped them see mental health as equally important as physical health, challenging cultural norms around ignoring emotional pain. Half of participant survey respondents (four out of eight) specifically reported that therapy or community connections had positively impacted their mental health, illustrating the program’s role in normalizing behavioral health care within the farmworker community.

**Figure 16. Participant Survey Respondents' Level of Comfort Reaching out to ALAS Staff,**  
April-June 2024, N=8<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024.

**Most participant survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the Farmworker Equity Express program.**

Five out of six participant survey respondents reported satisfaction with the services provided, with one farmworker focus group participant noting that they especially appreciated the support received from the program. In addition, seven out of eight respondents noted they learned something useful through their participation in the program.<sup>17</sup>

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“More than anything, [I like] the support that ALAS gives us. The support is the best.”  
- Focus Group Participant  
(Farmworker)

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## Cultural and Community Connection

**Participant survey data showed that the program significantly strengthened participants’ connection to their culture and community, serving as additional protective factors. All eight survey respondents strongly agreed that they felt more connected to their cultural roots**

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“...cultural connection is very important as culture has no language...When you have the opportunity to explore [your] culture, you enter another dimension that helps your mental health.”

- Focus Group Participant  
(Cultural Arts Provider)

**and the broader community while participating in the program, with each respondent rating this aspect a five out of five (**

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Figure 17). This further reflects the success of the program’s culturally responsive approach, which was integral in helping participants feel grounded and understood. Programs like Reinas de Corazones have provided a safe space for participants to release stress and feel comfortable expressing themselves. This blend of cultural connection and community engagement has allowed

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“...We’ve seen people who were very shy suddenly talking and expressing themselves differently.”

- Focus Group Participant  
(Cultural Arts Provider)

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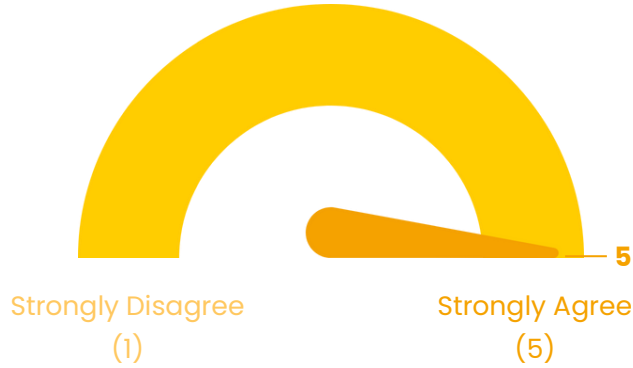
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participants to experience a renewed sense of belonging, emotional release, and empowerment, further underscoring the program’s impact on their overall well-being.

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<sup>17</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024.

**Figure 17. Participant Survey Respondents' Level of Cultural and Community Connection, April-June 2024, N=8<sup>18</sup>**



On average, participant survey respondents <b>strongly agreed</b> that:	N
• I felt connected to my culture.	8 out of 8
• I felt connected to my community.	8 out of 8

“...With me, they can open up; some have cried, and they feel comfortable.”  
 - Focus Group Participant  
 (Cultural Arts Provider)

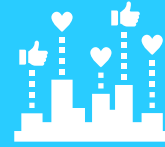
While program staff and cultural arts providers positively impact participants, **the participants, in turn, leave a lasting impression on the staff and providers.** A cultural arts provider focus group participant recalled a powerful moment when a

farmworker participant shared that the staff and cultural arts providers are important to the participants just as the participants are important to the staff and providers, highlighting the reciprocal relationship and deep connection formed through the program.

“You are important to me, and I am important to you.”  
 - Focus Group Participant (Cultural Arts Provider)

<sup>18</sup> Data Source: Participant Survey, 2024.

## EQ4. NEEDS AND BEST PRACTICES



The following section outlines the key needs and best practices identified by the Farmworker Equity Express program to support farmworker behavioral health.

### **EQ4. TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE FARMWORKER EQUITY EXPRESS PROGRAM IDENTIFY THE NEEDS AND BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT FARMWORKER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH?**

**As this program is an INN program, it is important to document the needs and best practices to support farmworker behavioral health. Intake assessment form results revealed that respondents, on average, rated their overall mental health and mental health over the past 30 days as “slightly good”, with average scores of 2.75 out of 5 and 2.62 out of 5, respectively (**

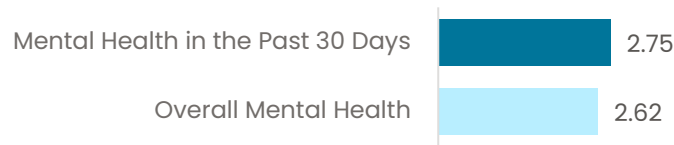


Figure 18).<sup>19</sup> Responses ranged from two to four, with most respondents giving a score of two or three, reflecting room for improvement in respondents' mental health status. Respondents rated their ability to cope with mental health symptoms as "good" (3 out of 5 on average), with one respondent rating it at a five and five rating it at a three. For coping with daily stressors, the average rating was "slightly good" (2.75 out of 5), with six participants rating it at a three and two rating it a two (Figure 19). Similarly, the ability to manage daily life activities was rated as "slightly good" (2.75 out of 5), suggesting that respondents experience moderate challenges in daily functioning (Figure 20).

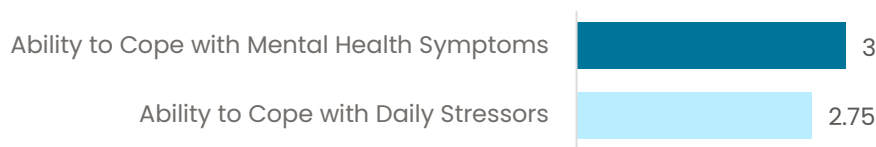
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<sup>19</sup> The intake assessment form statements were rated using a 5-point Likert scale with 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good, and 5=Excellent.

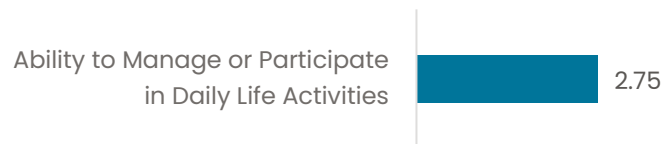
**Figure 18. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Mental Health Self-Ratings, April-June 2024, N=8<sup>20</sup>**



**Figure 19. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Coping Ability Self-Ratings, April-June 2024, N=8<sup>21</sup>**



**Figure 20. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Participation in Daily Life Self-Rating, April-June 2024, N=8<sup>22</sup>**



**At intake, assessment respondents reported experiencing multiple co-existing behavioral health symptoms, with the most common being significant tiredness or low energy (reported by four respondents), major changes in sleeping habits (three respondents), feelings of depression or hopelessness (two respondents), and confusion or difficulty concentrating (two respondents). This range of symptoms highlights the complexity of participant needs and underscores the necessity of a robust approach to behavioral health support (**

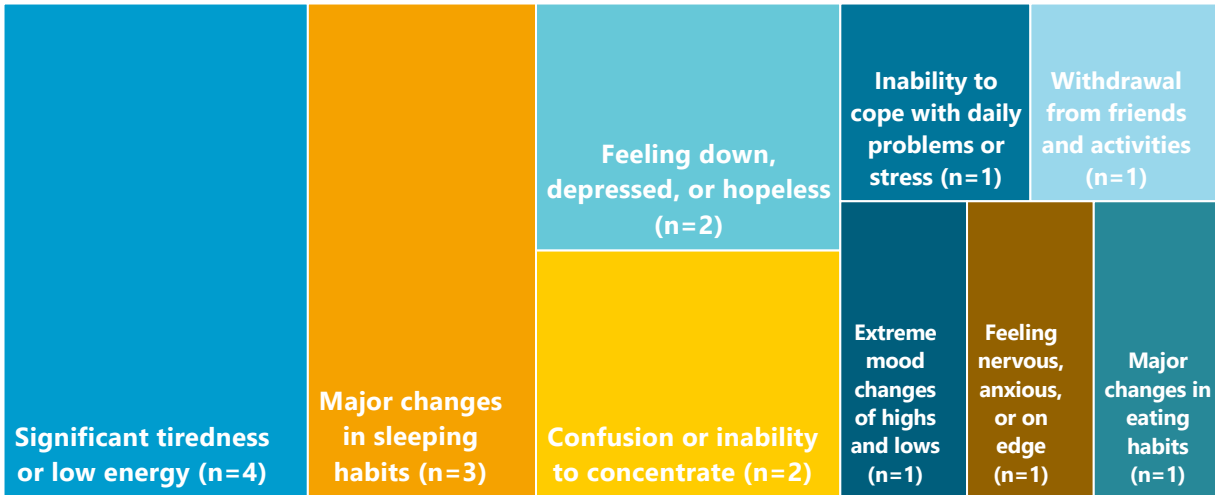
<sup>20</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

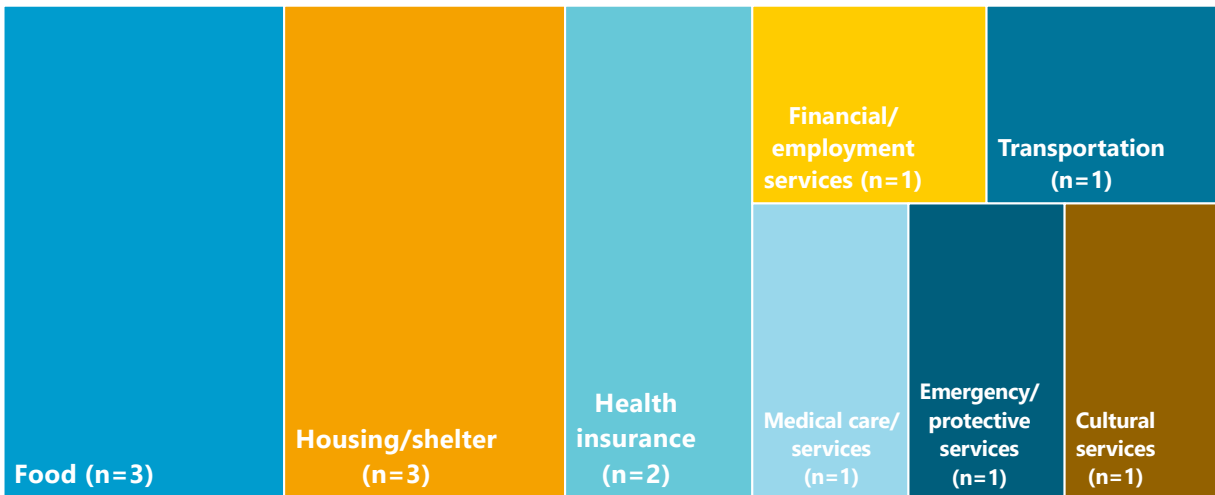
Figure 21).

**Figure 21. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Behavioral Health Symptoms at Intake, April-June 2024, N=5<sup>23</sup>**



Additionally, assessment form respondents expressed needs for basic supports at intake, with food and housing or shelter identified as the most common needs (each by three respondents), followed by health insurance (two respondents). These findings indicate that the program’s behavioral health support is strengthened by addressing broader socioeconomic needs, as these factors heavily influence participants' mental health and stability (Figure 22).

**Figure 22. Intake Assessment Form Respondents' Supports Needed at Intake, April-June 2024, N=6<sup>24</sup>**



<sup>23</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> Data Source: Intake Assessment Form, 2024.

Focus group discussions with staff unveiled important perspectives into the unique needs of the farmworker community and the best practices that have proven effective. Staff emphasized the importance of language-specific services, mental health education, and trauma-informed care tailored to the emotional challenges that farmworkers commonly face (Figure 23). Best practices identified to address these needs included involving the community in program design, providing ongoing cultural competency training for providers, and utilizing the mobile bus to reduce barriers related to transportation and remote locations. Staff also highlighted the importance of remaining flexible and adaptable to environmental challenges, such as weather or community incidents, to maintain continuity of care.

**Figure 23. Additional Participant Needs Identified by Program Staff**



Looking ahead, the Farmworker Equity Express program’s experience provides lessons learned and best practices that can inform future behavioral health programs who service underserved communities. Key practices, such as community involvement in program design, ongoing cultural competency training for staff, and a trauma-informed approach tailored to the unique challenges farmworkers face, are promising in enhancing the program’s impact. As the program continues to evolve, these strategies will remain central to ensuring that behavioral health services remain accessible, relevant, and responsive to the diverse needs of farmworkers. As it moves forward, the program’s ongoing commitment to adapting and expanding its services will continue to strengthen its role as a trusted resource, improving behavioral health outcomes and quality of life for the farmworker community.



# Recommendations

Based on findings from the first year of the Farmworker Equity Express program, several recommendations can help to improve the program's impact and sustainability. These recommendations focus on expanding current successes, addressing participant needs, and further strengthening program delivery.

- **Expand Awareness of Referrals and Screening Services.** Since few respondents utilized linkages, referrals, and screening services, consider enhancing communication around these offerings. Staff could integrate information about these services into popular sessions like grief counseling or cultural arts activities to boost awareness and understanding of the benefits they provide.
- **Promote Cross-Participation.** Encourage participants in popular groups, like Hijas de la Luna or Arte Como Sanación, to explore other services that may support their needs, such as individual counseling or assessments. A brief introduction to available services at the start or end of each group session could help participants consider other resources that might be beneficial.
- **Additional Outreach to Younger and Older Age Groups.** Since the majority of participants were between the ages of 26–59, additional outreach might help engage younger or older farmworkers who could benefit from the program. Tailoring services to the interests and needs of these age groups, such as youth-focused workshops or elder-specific support, could increase their engagement.
- **Enhance Stigma Reduction Efforts.** Building on current success, consider additional anti-stigma activities, such as storytelling or peer-led sessions, to further normalize mental health discussions within the community.
- **Evaluate Less Utilized Services.** Consider gathering feedback from participants on why services like linkages, referrals, and screenings are less utilized. This may reveal insights into possible adjustments in service delivery or indicate a need for more culturally relevant adaptations.
- **Encourage Greater Participation in Program Evaluation Activities.** Encouraging higher engagement in evaluation activities will ensure the program continues to reflect the evolving needs of the farmworker community and can support meaningful improvements based on participants' input. Additionally, exploring reasons for low participation in evaluation activities during the first year may reveal barriers that can be addressed to enhance future engagement.

# Appendices

## Appendix A. Detailed Implementation Timeline

Month/Year	Farmworker Equity Express Implementation Updates
Jul 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS and RDA completed the evaluation kickoff meeting this month</li> <li>Mobile BHS for Farmworkers project launch was supposed to take place in July 2023; however, there were contracting approval delays on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, which pushed the project launch to August 2023.</li> </ul>
Aug 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS launched the project this month</li> <li>ALAS continued to think through ideas for mental health services and how to engage with clients for individual therapy</li> <li>ALAS and RDA completed the first evaluation planning session this month</li> </ul>
Sep 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS continued to think through ideas for mental health services, including many ideas focused on de-stigmatization and ideas that incorporate the arts</li> <li>ALAS planned to begin a monthly Grief workshop for Dia de los Muertos at the beginning of October. This was especially needed in light of the recent violence and community member deaths in Half Moon Bay (and over the last few years)</li> <li>ALAS planned to use monthly thematic workshops as a pipeline to connect clients to other services (e.g., individual therapy)</li> <li>ALAS started Corazones de Oros this month, a monthly support group for seniors, facilitated by the USF psychologist and mental health team. This will focus on psychoeducation and depression prevention, as well as tracking depressive symptoms and treatment satisfaction.</li> <li>ALAS and RDA completed the second evaluation planning session this month</li> </ul>
Oct 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS held first Grief workshop this month for Dia de los that involved going to the ranch, learning about grief and the connection to skull painting, food, and outreach</li> <li>ALAS mental health team held a breakfast social event with the farmworker team to get acquainted and facilitate communication. They planned to resume these breakfasts once monthly.</li> <li>ALAS had 100 participants join the Half Moon Bay pumpkin festival, 20 of which were farmworkers.</li> <li>ALAS and RDA completed the third evaluation planning session this month</li> <li>Although ALAS had intended to form and convene an Advisory group, this was ultimately delayed until May 2024. The team spent the Fall of 2023 working to identify key leaders from the Farmworkers community for the board. In October</li> </ul>

Month/Year	Farmworker Equity Express Implementation Updates
	<p>2023, RDA engaged in discussions and shared a resource guide with ALAS to help support the development of their advisory board.</p>
Nov 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ALAS concluded the series of 3 Grief workshops this month, and these went really well. The mental health team noticed that attendance got a bit smaller at each successive group, but they weren't sure about the reason for this.</li> <li>● ALAS confirmed they will be offering the following services as part of the program: grief groups, accordion groups, compadres groups, and Corazones de Oro</li> <li>● ALAS outreached individually to folks who might be interested in joining the Advisory Group. David confirmed he would be a member of the group.</li> <li>● ALAS continued to think through appropriate channels/methods for a client referral system.</li> </ul>
Dec 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ALAS worked to finalize their referral system protocol and tracking system this month</li> <li>● ALAS planned to re-evaluate their services and programming in the new year</li> <li>● ALAS planned to develop and convene their advisory group around the end of January 2024</li> <li>● ALAS noted that recent storms have made it difficult for farmworkers to get to work, which has shifted how the program connected with the Farmworker community (e.g., using truck instead of bus). Ultimately, many farmworkers were out of work completely (with a ruined crop) starting in Dec 2023 due to the storms, and this impacted their ability to get services in some cases.</li> </ul>
Jan 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This month, the Half Moon Bay community held a memorial for the victims of a mass shooting one year ago</li> </ul>
Feb 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ALAS welcomed a new program director for Farmworkers this month, Sandra!</li> <li>● ALAS saw an uptick in referrals from farmworkers and intakes this month, due to the farmworker team proactive engagement and work to recruit trainees</li> <li>● ALAS worked to finalize the paperwork for the mobile van and figure out how to engage folks in services in the field, due to the current demand</li> <li>● ALAS continued to provide services this month, including the Corazones de Oro group for older adults, a workshop focused on narrative approaches led by the mental health team, and individual therapy.</li> <li>● ALAS began screening couples this month in preparation for a new "couples group" they planned to start in April 2024</li> </ul>
Mar 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ALAS held a staff training on data collection tools this month</li> <li>● ALAS started a new group this month, "Art for Healing and Resistance", facilitated by licensed social workers</li> <li>● ALAS hosted RDA for a site visit as part of the evaluation activities. RDA trained staff on focus group facilitation, facilitated a staff focus group, and participated/observed the group "Art for Healing and Resistance" (second session)</li> </ul>
Apr 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ALAS started a couples workgroup this month, focused on psychoeducation and led by the mental health team</li> </ul>



Month/Year	Farmworker Equity Express Implementation Updates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS attended a meeting with the housing commission regarding the "555 Kelly" city housing project, with many senior farmworkers in attendance to share their stories and advocate that the 555 Kelly property be used as housing for senior farmworkers.</li> <li>ALAS prepared for first advisory group convening to take place in May</li> <li>ALAS continued to engage staff this month in meetings and trainings, as well as working to better delineate "Farmworkers" services at ALAS from other program services at ALAS</li> <li>ALAS had been using a truck to do Farmworker field outreach because the bus had not been operational for a period. The team discussed ways to overcome barriers to accessing certain farm communities (e.g., bus has hard time reaching very tiny farms without paved roads)</li> <li>ALAS noted that Farmworkers had been out of work due to the storms. But this month, Second Harvest was able to deliver food to farmworkers in a little mini van.</li> </ul>
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS finalized activities for a first annual "Wellness Day" at a park, with different stations for self-care, psychoeducation, traditional healers, and a raffle.</li> <li>ALAS hosted the first advisory group meeting on May 7th.</li> <li>ALAS got the mobile bus back up and going to farms four days a week to engage and recruit participants for the program.</li> <li>ALAS started piloting drop-in crisis hours both on the bus and on-site as another method of engaging/enrolling farmworkers who don't already have appointments.</li> <li>ALAS learned this month that the 555 Kelly housing project was approved as housing for farmworkers!</li> <li>ALAS has continued to try using every program within ALAS to be creative in meeting community needs (e.g., staff from other ALAS programs can access bus to introduce themselves to farmworkers community).</li> </ul>
Jun 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS hosted their program's 10-year anniversary gala this month!</li> <li>ALAS hosted an event for female farmworkers at the county fair this month. They had the mobile bus there, and the event was recognized by the board of supervisors.</li> <li>ALAS noticed that the food pantry program has been a successful/common initial entry point for prospective participants to connect to the program, get a case manager, referrals, and mental health. "It's so much more than just getting a bag of food".</li> <li>ALAS shared that bulk of farmworker crop was ruined or delayed due to the storms, and many farmworkers remained out of work since Dec 2023.</li> </ul>

Month/Year	Farmworker Equity Express Implementation Updates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALAS found that it was challenging for their small team of staff to bring services and food to 30 farms each month, especially as they also facilitate health resources, workshops, and other grant projects. During one of the evaluation focus groups with farmworkers, staff responded to feedback from participants that ALAS had not been to their specific farm in awhile, which allowed staff to be responsive to the feedback and prioritize outreach there next (which they did).</li> <li>ALAS has had some staffing shifts as a result of their operations office restructuring.</li> <li>ALAS attended three planning commission meetings for the 555 Kelly project after it was approved (for appeals process, public comment).</li> <li>ALAS planned for their upcoming community advisory board (CAB) meeting</li> </ul>

## Appendix B. Learning Goals, Evaluation Questions, Data Indicators and Measures, and Data Sources

LEARNING GOAL	PROCESS EVALUATION		
<p><b>To assess and improve the implementation of the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program to ensure it effectively meets participant needs, fosters collaboration, and delivers quality services.</b></p>	Evaluation Question	Data Measures	Data Sources
	<p>How is the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program being <b>implemented over time</b>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successes and/or challenges to implementation</li> <li>Adaptations to implementation in response to participant needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmworker Equity Express staff focus group</li> <li>Participant focus group</li> <li>Evaluation meeting notes</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographics of participants served</li> <li>• Total number of participants served</li> <li>• Total, count, and type of services provided</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Staff support</li> <li>• Staff satisfaction</li> <li>• Type of culturally responsive interventions used</li> <li>• Participants' behavioral health needs met</li> <li>• Program elements that contributed to participant engagement</li> <li>• Program elements that contributed to participant perceived outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant survey</li> <li>• Cultural art provider(s) focus group</li> <li>• Program observation checklist</li> </ul>
<p><b>To determine the extent to which the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program enhances access to and utilization of behavioral health services among the Latinx farmworker community, while reducing stigma and increasing awareness of available resources.</b></p>	<p><b>OUTCOME EVALUATION</b></p>		
	<p>To what extent does the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program, a culturally responsive mobile behavioral health resource, <b>expand access to and utilization of</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families served by mobile service</li> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families linked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake assessment form</li> <li>• Participant survey</li> <li>• Participant focus group</li> </ul>

	behavioral health services in the Latinx farmworker community?	<p>to behavioral health services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families attending behavioral health service appointments</li> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families who experienced increased access to behavioral health services</li> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families who experienced increased awareness of mental health and behavioral health</li> <li>• Count of farmworkers/families who experienced increased knowledge of mental health and behavioral health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmworker Equity Express staff focus group</li> </ul>
<p><b>To examine the extent to which the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program improves behavioral health service adoption and outcomes within the Latinx farmworker community, integrating cultural arts activities with formal clinical services, ultimately improving mental and behavioral health along with quality of life.</b></p>	<p>To what extent does the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program, an integrated approach using cultural arts and formal clinical services, support behavioral health <b>service adoption and</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographics, count of farmworkers/families participating in cultural arts activities</li> <li>• Farmworker satisfaction with cultural arts activities and behavioral health services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake assessment form</li> <li>• Participant survey</li> <li>• Participant focus group</li> <li>• Farmworker Equity Express staff focus group</li> </ul>

	<p><b>outcomes</b> among the Latinx farmworker community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Count and average of farmworkers who report experiencing increased protective factors and improved behavioral health outcomes</li> <li>• Type and count of referrals and linkages to other resources and services (e.g., basic needs)</li> <li>• Count and average of farmworkers who report experiencing improved mental health</li> <li>• Count and average of farmworkers who report experiencing improved quality of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural art provider(s) focus group</li> </ul>
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**To identify and document the needs, best practices, and lessons learned from the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program, ensuring its adaptability for replication and scaling in other counties implementing similar programs to better support farmworker behavioral health.**

To what extent does the Mobile BHS for Farmworkers program identify the **needs and best practices** to support farmworker behavioral health?

- Most commonly identified behavioral health symptoms and causes
- Most commonly identified unmet basic needs
- Most highly rated program components
- Program modifications made over time in response to client and staff feedback
- Reported lessons learned

- Intake assessment form
- Participant focus group
- Farmworker Equity Express staff focus group
- Evaluation meeting notes