



ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Loudoun

Program Title: Worker Protection Standard Training

Program Category: Agriculture, Environment, & Energy

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Monica Spells

Title: Deputy County Administrator

Signature: Monica Spells
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Executive Summary

The Loudoun Department of Extension Services (Loudoun DES) is dedicated to assisting local growers and agricultural workers addressing horticultural production needs.

EPA has a federal regulation that requires owners of farms that apply pesticides which in its label have the WPS (Worker Protection Standard training) requirement, to train their workers on WPS in the language their workers understand. The training has the goal of ensuring the safety of the workers and the environment. Loudoun's agricultural sector, mainly winegrowers, must comply with this regulation when applying pesticides, which represents a challenge for farmers due to the language barrier.

Loudoun DES has fostered the right conditions to continuously provide the WPS training whenever the farmers need it.

Problem or Need Addressed by the Program

All the regulations farmers face are a big hurdle they must learn and comply with to keep farming. Finding agricultural workers, educating them, and motivating them to continue working on a farm is hard to achieve. By providing relevant education to agricultural workers, in a respectful, timely manner, and in their own language, Loudoun County farms can continue having a labor force, which is the backbone of any agricultural system.

This initiative is innovative since there are a very limited number of bilingual educators in Virginia that can provide this type of training, and the Loudoun DES is the county department that can



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do it. The training courses are usually provided by nonprofit or for-profit companies on a non-regular basis. Farmers in all Virginia counties need to adapt to the availability of the trainers, which in most cases does not fit the schedules of farmers and workers. To solve this problem, the Loudoun DES has conducted bilingual WPS training courses tailored for the job agricultural workers and farmers perform without leaving their work site whenever they need it. This type of education has created awareness on human health and the environment while working with pesticides.

Program Description

The Loudoun DES's staff has overcome language and literacy barriers, lack of awareness, cultural and communication gaps, scheduling challenges, resource limitations, and workers' mobility by reaching out to farmers and agricultural workers, creating a trusting relationship and providing *in situ* training. In 2024, Loudoun DES conducted WPS training for 147 workers working in about 30 vineyards. At each individual training, agricultural workers and handlers received approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes of education on EPA topics using Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) material. All workers trained received personal protective equipment (safety glasses, gloves, and face covers); equipment obtained through a collaboration with a grant from Virginia Tech.

Program Results

This type of training has been provided by the Loudoun DES for 9 consecutive years, reaching its peak in 2024. This shows the viability and constant growth of this initiative over these years.

The scope of this practice reaches the whole county and has helped to keep farmers and



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agricultural workers safe with no health incidents or pesticide spills in 2024.