A. ASSESSMENT OF NEED
West Virginia has 95% percent family-owned and operated farms and continues to lead the nation in the category of “small farms”. Agricultural products generate approximately a half-billion dollars worth of revenue in this state. It is estimated that most of the income from agricultural sales recirculates within the local economy-five times for each dollar. Each year West Virginians report spending $7.2 billion on food; but West Virginia farmers capture only 19 cents of every dollar spent on food in the state.

In 2012 West Virginia experienced some unusual weather conditions which affected the crops and vegetation. During the first part of the year there was an early warm spell which resulted in early blooming of fruit bearing trees. There was a late freeze which destroyed many of the same blooms. Next on June 29, 2012, the derecho storm and other severe weather such as hail and high winds damaged the remaining crops and farm equipment. Finally, a shortage of rainfall plagued many growers; however, some farmers were able to achieve close-to-normal crop yields. However, Eastern Panhandle apple growers had a record breaking crop yield due to the early warm weather which greatly enhanced their product.

(i) Review of the previous year’s agricultural activity in the state
   Major crops in the Eastern Panhandle include peaches, apples and berries. The specific months of heavy activity for each crop are listed below.
   July through August – peaches
   August through October-apples
   Mid-May through September-berries

(ii) Review of the previous year’s MSFW activity in the state
   It is estimated that agricultural employers in the Eastern Panhandle employed about 200 MSFWs for farm work related to peaches, 250 MSFWs worked in the apple orchards and 40 to 50 MSFWs harvested berries. Approximately 200 or more MSFWs were employed for working with other fruits such as pears, grapes, plums, nectarines, pumpkins, watermelons and cantaloupes.

(iii) Projected level of agricultural activity expected in the state in the coming year.
   In the Eastern Panhandle, several growers are planting new fruit trees and adding more berries to increase their overall fruit production.
(iv) Projected number of MSFWs in the state in the coming year

In the coming year the estimated number of MSFWs in the state will be approximately 900 to 1,000*. This estimate includes the unknown number of MSFWs who may be hired in the poultry business, turkey farms, tomato greenhouses, wineries and at least one (1) large tree farm/nursery employer has indicated he may hire MSFWs to work for him. Also, some MSFWs will be served by our partner agencies; and they will receive employment data and information about accessing employment services.

*As we previously reported in the 2012 AOP, our employment registration form allows the job seeker to self-identify and often MSFWs do not elect to identify themselves as MSFWs on this document which will impact our total number served.

B. Outreach Activities

(i) Numerical goals: 600 MSFWs are to be contacted; the MSFW Outreach Worker is expected to contact approximately 400 MSFWs and staff from partner agencies, including the 167 grantee may serve up to approximately 200 MSFWs. (Shenandoah Valley Medical Services anticipates serving 275 MSFW’s which would exceed our prediction of a total of 200 workers for all partner agencies.)

(ii) A. Assessment of Available Resources

1. The State Workforce Agency (SWA) has assigned to outreach services the following positions: One (1) MSFW Outreach Worker, located in Martinsburg, WV and the State Monitor Advocate located at the state office in Charleston, WV.

2. The number of SWA staff working in MSFW Outreach Services remains the same.

3. Other community resources available to serve MSFWs are staff from the following agencies: Telamon Corporation, local Workforce Investment Boards, Shenandoah Valley Medical Services, Legal Aid of West Virginia and Catholic Charities.

(iii) Tools to be utilized for outreach contacts include personal verbal contact, printed material and videotapes with information presented in Spanish and English.

C. Services provided to MSFWs through the American Job Center Network

Core, intensive and training services required under WIA will be offered by staff at the American Job Centers (AJC) and some services are provided in the field. SWA staff may utilize Spanish/English written materials, information to be provided, if necessary, translation via telephone and/or sent electronically to customer via computer. Also, SWA staff may provide supportive services, guidance counseling, job development and referral services.

D. Services Provided to Agricultural Employers through the American Job Center

Eastern Panhandle agricultural employers will continue to be contacted through outreach worker activities such as employer worksite visits, orientation/recruitment/registration meetings, field checks, etc. Employer outreach activities will continue in the remainder of the state.
The number of farmer’s markets continues to increase around the state. These markets are operated by various individuals and groups; some markets may be directed by an individual who participates as a vendor, other markets are run by co-op members and another type of farmer’s market is owned and operated by one (1) person who procures products which he sells at a small stand along a busy road or highway. As a result of this growth trend in local farmer’s markets, the State Monitor Advocate and SWA staff are conducting research and visiting local farmer’s markets to view their facilities and operations as well as determine their utilization rate, products offered and services needed from the local workforce agency.

Growing grapes for wine purposes is an agribusiness that is thriving in West Virginia. Presently, the state has thirteen (13) known wineries. Most of these wineries are located in the southern part of the state; however, the Eastern Panhandle has several vineyards and wine making facilities. Studies have shown that with careful planning and management, grapes can be grown in West Virginia for commercial use and home. The State Monitor Advocate is contacting these employers regarding their business operations and potential workforce needs.

Information about services provided by local Work Force West Virginia staff is made available to each agricultural employer; services such as job recruitment, job training and job development are discussed.

E. Data Analysis
   (i) Previous year’s history (based on Program Year PY 2011 data):
      21 Agricultural job orders and 459 openings received
      20 Agricultural job orders filled with 427 openings filled
      95% Agricultural orders filled
      1 H2-A clearance order received
      2 H2-A clearance order initiated

   (ii) Plan for upcoming year (based on estimated data):
      24 Agricultural job orders expected to be received
      23 Agricultural job orders expected to be filled
      95% Agricultural orders expected to be filled
      1 H2-A clearance order received
      2 H2-A clearance order initiated

F. Other Requirements
   (i) The State Monitor Advocate has read and reviewed this 2013 Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) for West Virginia.

   (ii) The AOP will be posted on the WorkForce West Virginia website at www.workforcewv.org, under the Public Notice section from May 2013 through August 2013. All written comments received, after June 30, 2013 will be shared with Department of Labor (DOL). If the plan needs to be amended, a copy of any modifications will be sent to DOL.
Below is a list of individuals, agencies and organizations contacted to provide information for the 2013 Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan:

Berkeley County Department of Health
Catholic Charities of West Virginia
Jefferson County Department of Health
Legal Aid of West Virginia
Shenandoah Valley Medical Systems, Inc.
Telamon Corporation (NFWJ Program)
West Virginia State Department of Agriculture
West Virginia State Department of Education
West Virginia State Department of Health
Work Force Region 1 Executive Director
Work Force Region 2 Executive Director
Work Force Region 3 Executive Director
Work Force Region 4 Executive Director
Work Force Region 5 Executive Director
Work Force Region 6 Executive Director
Work Force Region 7 Executive Director
WV Beekeepers Association
WV Nursery & Landscaping Association
West Virginia University- Agricultural & Natural Science Resources
Aviagen Turkey, Inc.
Pilgrim’s Pride Corporation
Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action (KISRA)
Crihfield Farms
Gritt’s Midway Greenhouse & Market

Bob’s Greenhouse & Market

Cole’s Nursery

G & G Nursery

Local Farm Bureau Agencies

WorkForce WV- Business Services