

The program is for the most part financed with Federal funds obtained through the Federal Unemployment Insurance Tax Act, and then appropriated by the Congress. Some additional monies are obtained from Congressional appropriations from the general revenue for specific purposes such as the administration of the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act.

3. History

The Federal Government has offered a program of employment services to farm workers and employers since the turn of this century, although not always under jurisdiction of the Department of Labor. The program in its present form dates from January 1948.

The employment service needs of agriculture and its workers have undergone a number of significant changes during this century, requiring changes in the direction and intensity of Federal assistance. The worker has evolved from an apprentice farmer to a day laborer to a skilled wage worker paralleling the evolution of the family farmer into the business farmer. As early as 1909, the Federal Government was considering means of obtaining annual employment for migrant agricultural workers, but the first active participation came in 1914 when Labor Department representatives furnished assistance to migrant workers, guiding them to jobs in the wheat harvest in the midwest and fruit harvest jobs in the northwest.

During the period between the two world wars, labor was abundant but jobs were less so. It was during this period, on July 1, 1933, that the Wagner-Peyser Act created the U.S. Employment Service, including a farm labor service, thus laying the groundwork for the development of a truly national program of employment services to agriculture.

The scarcity of all types of labor created by the Second World War further expanded the scope of employment services afforded agricultural employers, as the Federal Government entered negotiations with Mexico for the entry of Mexican workers to meet seasonal agricultural labor shortages in the United States.

From the International Agreement of August 4, 1942, until the termination of Public Law 78 on December 31, 1964, the Mexican supplemental labor program continued uninterrupted, rising to almost half a million workers in 1956, and changing only in the terms of the Agreement and legislation upon which it was based. During the same period smaller numbers of Bahamian and British West Indians, Canadians, Spanish Basques, Japanese and Filipinos also found temporary employment on United States farms and ranches.

Since World War II, several significant additions have been made to the farm labor service program to assure that a truly national employment service program is available to agriculture, and to assure that the farm worker, and particularly the seasonal farm worker, will share more fully in the abundance this country has to offer.

In 1954, an Annual Worker Plan was put into effect to coordinate the movement of migratory workers between crop areas, and to furnish continuous employment to such workers by scheduling them for a series of jobs prior to the start of their annual journey. The Annual Worker Plan was based upon the successful Eastern Seaboard Plan which had been developed in 1948.