

Support the Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act

Background

Congress has not modernized the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers program in 40 years, even as it has become the primary legal workforce option for many growers. This is despite the program remaining costly, complex, and limited for some segments of agriculture. Without reform, labor challenges will continue to reduce competitiveness and increase pressure on growers and workers and threaten domestic food production.

The Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act (SAWA) builds upon the work of a **bipartisan working group** to make **common sense reforms to the H-2A program**.

- In fiscal year 2025, only 182 domestic workers applied for over 415,000 job openings.
- In the past 10 years, H-2A certifications have grown 185% to cover this labor shortage.

Expanding Access to H-2A

The H-2A program has long locked out sectors of agriculture due to arbitrary seasonal requirements. SAWA makes H-2A accessible to more agricultural producers by:

- ✓ Removing seasonal requirements
- ✓ Expanding maximum contract lengths to 350 days
- ✓ Defining further definitions of agricultural work, including controlled environment agriculture and aquaculture
- ✓ Allowing packing houses to access the program regardless of product ownership
- ✓ Providing an opportunity for existing agricultural workers to become eligible for H-2A status
- ✓ This only applies to current agricultural workers and does **not** include a pathway to citizenship

Controlling Costs

Historical Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) methodologies caused H-2A wages to outpace inflation by over 70% since 2010. SAWA controls rapid wage growth and provides additional cost predictability by:

- ✓ Codifying the Oct. 2, 2025 wage methodology, better reflecting wage variation and allowing experienced positions to earn higher wages
 - This rule is estimated to save employers over \$1.5 billion in 2026
- ✓ Providing a daily housing credit to account for nonwage costs
 - Fairer to workers that perform more than 40 hours of work compared to current methodology
 - American H-2A workers take on average 10% more of their paycheck home than other developed nation guestworkers due to the additional benefits of H-2A
- ✓ Providing wage predictability by limiting year-over-year changes
- ✓ Preventing unrelated administrative fees from being charged during application
 - USCIS application fees jumped 65% - 267% due to a \$600 fee funding the asylum program

Streamlining Use

The H-2A program requires interacting with numerous government agencies. Bureaucratic delays can cause farmers to miss critical planting or harvest windows, creating significant economic losses. SAWA streamlines use of H-2A by:

- ✓ Allowing for multi-year labor certifications and housing inspections
- ✓ Providing flexibilities for the dynamic nature of agricultural production
- ✓ Mandating the creation of an online system for easy transfer of information and interactions between employers, workers, and agencies

A reliable workforce is critical to a strong farm economy, a secure U.S. food system, and a healthier America. The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) is proud to support the Securing Agriculture's Workforce Act to address the agricultural labor challenges facing America's farmers and food supply chain and **encourages you to cosponsor the bill.**