

## Demographics / Background



Each summer South Jersey is host to 6,000 migrant workers during the blueberry harvest from mid-June through late July. Statistics are from New Jersey Department of Labor reports and from our observation when visiting area migrant camps. About 1,600 of these workers are of Haitian descent. Many of them travel here by bus, from their homes in southern Florida. About 4,400 Hispanic workers arrive every summer, traveling to NJ from Mexico and Central America, and from other states within the U.S. During the blueberry harvest, most migrant workers reside in migrant camps owned by the growers, in Hammonton and in other South Jersey communities.

Some migrant workers travel with family members. Husbands and wives may work together or may be assigned to different work crews. Teens and adults work in the fields, in the heat of the day, seven days a week. School-aged children attend a migrant education program five days a week. There is a separate migrant education program in the evenings, for youth up through age 21. Some young adult migrant workers are enrolled in college and are working during the summer to help pay their tuition. Migrant workers who were born in the United States speak English. Many of the migrant workers who are middle aged or older have a limited ability to communicate in English. In the camps where Migrant Worker Outreach holds English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in the evenings, workers of all ages participate.

