

Preparing for New Worker Standards **Engagement Summary**

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Executive summary

In response to upcoming changes to some federal temporary foreign worker program streams, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food sought feedback from organizations that represent temporary foreign workers as well as employers of temporary foreign workers in agriculture, primary processing, and seafood processing sectors. The purpose of the engagement was to gather data on the current worker housing conditions, including the extent to which the new federal minimum requirements (for example, sufficient water supply per person) were already being met and where not currently being met, to determine the support needed to meet the new requirements.

Feedback was gathered through an online survey for employers (104 responses), 3 engagement sessions with settlement and advocacy organizations (11 attendees), and 6 key informant interviews.

To ensure maximum reach of the survey as well as effective targeted reach of the info sessions and workshops, Citizens Engagement developed an extensive multi-channel outreach plan that leveraged the government's pre-existing connections with key participant groups: farmers, seafood producers, advocacy organizations and settlement support workers. Newsletters, websites and email lists from within the Ministries of Health, Agriculture & Food, and Labour were used where appropriate to reach target interest-holders. Outreach also included developing and sharing promotional materials for contacts to promote these engagement opportunities within their own networks and memberships, including an info toolkit and graphics and messaging for newsletters, blog updates, and social media.

The key themes found across respondents included:

- **Lack of awareness of the 12 new housing standards:** awareness was uneven across audiences. Many workers and some employers were unfamiliar with the new requirements or found them unclear, often due to limited outreach and language barriers.
- **Insufficient housing conditions:** temporary foreign workers commonly face overcrowding, poor maintenance, lack of privacy, and inadequate access to basic amenities like clean water, sanitation, and fire safety. Over 90% of employers who completed the survey indicated they were already meeting the requirements, while those who were not currently meeting them, planned to meet the requirements by 2027.
- **Power imbalance:** workers feared speaking out due to risk of retaliation, job loss, or deportation. Women were especially vulnerable, facing restrictions, harassment, and limited healthcare access.

- **Funding:** employers cited high costs and infrastructure limitations as key barriers to meeting the new requirements. Both employers and settlement/advocacy organizations expressed the need for financial support.
- **Communication and awareness:** language and information gaps limit workers' understanding of their rights and available services. Respondents called for clear, multilingual, and accessible communication tools.
- **Compliance and enforcement:** inspections were seen as inconsistent, often staged, and lacking follow-up. Participants called for unannounced visits, stronger penalties, multilingual complaint mechanisms, and improved oversight.

Table of Contents

- Project overview4**
- Engagement and methodology6**
 - Engagement opportunities..... 6
 - Outreach 7
 - Method of analysis..... 8
- Key themes.....9**
 - Awareness and understanding of the 12 new housing requirements 9
 - Housing conditions..... 10
 - Power imbalance..... 12
 - Power imbalance: gendered considerations..... 13
 - Support needed..... 14
 - Funding..... 14
 - Communication and awareness 15
 - Compliance and enforcement 16
- Discrepancies in findings19**

Project overview

Temporary foreign workers are important for keeping British Columbia’s farms and foods systems running and they contribute to local communities and the economy. The Province is dedicated to ensuring temporary foreign workers are treated with dignity and their rights are respected, including access to safe housing that supports their health and wellbeing.

In British Columbia, employer-provided housing (including for temporary foreign workers) is a regulated activity under the *Public Health Act*, specifically the [Industrial Camps Regulation](#). Through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the Canadian government is making changes to federal agriculture program streams for temporary foreign workers, including new minimum standards for housing in sectors related to agriculture, primary agricultural processing, and seafood processing. They have created 12 new requirements that every province must put in place by January 2027. See table 1 below for the draft list of the 12 requirements. Employers in B.C. who provide housing will need to meet the program requirements to be eligible to hire (and keep hiring) temporary foreign workers.

<p>Water supply</p> <p>Enough hot and cold water at good enough pressure for drinking, cooking, and laundry. Hot water tanks must provide at least 75 litres per resident.</p>	<p>Heating and ventilation</p> <p>Permanent heating and cooling systems 20 to 23 °C, with adjustable controls. Ventilation (windows and fans) in all rooms.</p>	<p>Fire safety</p> <p>Smoke alarms and regularly maintained fire extinguishers near exits and cooking areas. Sprinkler systems in buildings four stories or taller.</p>
<p>Building integrity</p> <p>Secure, weatherproof buildings, free from leaks and drafts, with ceilings at least 2.13 meters high.</p>	<p>Chemical and equipment storage</p> <p>Hazardous materials stored at least 30 meters from living and sleeping areas.</p>	<p>Water and water systems</p> <p>Proper plumbing for water supply and waste disposal. Septic systems required if no sewer connection.</p>
<p>Pest control</p> <p>Housing must be free from bugs and rodents. Windows must have intact screens; pest control measures provided.</p>	<p>Lighting</p> <p>Enough natural or artificial lighting in all areas including kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms, and hallways.</p>	<p>Furniture and equipment</p> <p>Clean and functional furniture: beds (at least 20 cm off ground), chairs, tables, storage, and cooking appliances.</p>
<p>Convenient facilities</p> <p>Bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens closely located, with indoor washrooms near sleeping areas (a 2-to-3 minute walk).</p>	<p>Personal space</p> <p>Each occupant needs at least 7 square metres of living space, with a dedicated bed for every person.</p>	<p>Inspection</p> <p>Inspectors must be authorized by the province to conduct the inspection.</p>

Table 1. Draft list of the 12 requirements (subject to change)

In 2022, ESDC published a [summary](#) report on consultations they conducted regarding temporary foreign worker housing, with initial proposed new housing requirements detailed in Annex A. These requirements were refined through additional engagement leading to the current 12 requirements shown above.

In this project, the province sought feedback from employers and organizations that represent temporary foreign workers. To support the transition to the new requirements, data was collected on the following topics:

- The current housing conditions in B.C. for temporary foreign workers
- The degree to which the new requirements are already being met
- Feasibility and areas of potential support to help meet proposed new requirements

These new requirements are expected to benefit both employers and workers, as they aim to prevent health hazards and promote morale and a healthier workforce.

Engagement and methodology

Through the engagement, the Province received feedback from employers who currently employ temporary foreign workers or intend to once the new Agriculture and Processing Stream is implemented and from organizations that support temporary foreign workers such as settlement service organizations, advocacy organizations, and consulates.

Engagement opportunities

Feedback opportunities included:

- **Online survey:** An online survey for employers provided an opportunity for feedback on the 12 requirements, the impact of implementing the 12 requirements, and any support needed to assist employers in meeting these 12 requirements. One hundred and four responses were received. The survey was also available in Punjabi.
- **Online engagement sessions:** Three focus group sessions were held for settlement services and worker advocacy organizations to gather information on the awareness of the proposed housing requirements, temporary foreign workers' living conditions, and support needed for effective implementation. Eleven participants from 6 different organizations attended.
- **Key informant interviews:** Six interviews were held for representatives from organizations with direct insight into the experiences of temporary foreign workers or of their employers. These included:
 - An agricultural industry association
 - Consulates
 - Union representatives
 - A settlement service organization

The results from the key informant interview with the settlement service organization were combined with the online engagement sessions.

- **Information sharing session:** An industry association information session was held to share details about the 12 housing requirements and to answer any questions from participants.

Outreach

Outreach leveraged partners and organizations to share information through their networks to help increase awareness and participation. These included industry associations, advocacy groups, and partner social media networks. By utilizing peer organizations and individuals to spread information and calls for participation, the outreach aimed to reach a broader audience, including employers who may not regularly engage with government channels.

The outreach plan used the networking strategy to ensure higher participation, especially during the planting season when the farming industry is particularly busy. This approach, combined with the Information Toolkit and the AgriService newsletter, also aimed to ensure employers are well informed about the proposed rule changes.

Outreach methods included:

- Alert on Employment Standards Branch program pages
- AgriService BC newsletter advertisement May 7 and June 4
- Direct email with survey link sent to 45+ seafood processors, and 40+ agriculture, fruit and vegetable processors (May 7, 2025)
- Direct email to industry associations
- Direct email with survey link and promotion package sent to 4 influencers on social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok) (May 7, 2025)
- Direct email to 23 advocacy organizations and settlement support organizations with invitation to sign up for online sessions (May 8, 2025)
- Telephone calls to 12 advocacy organizations and settlement support organizations (May 14, 2025)
- Email or telephone calls to key informants

These targeted groups represent a significant portion of the B.C. agriculture, seafood, and food processing sectors and were considered most likely to yield the greatest results for a diverse cohort of responses.

Method of analysis

Survey:

Between May 7 and June 20, 2025, employers shared their input through an online survey. The survey consisted of both closed (choice) and open-ended (text entry) questions.

Responses to the closed-ended questions were tallied and summarized in graphics. The responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches, and overarching themes were identified.

Online engagement sessions and key informant interviews:

The written data from the online engagement sessions and key informant interviews were first organized and summarized separately. Both inductive and deductive approaches were used to identify key themes. Through multiple rounds of review, recurring ideas and insights were grouped into main themes highlighting the most important findings.

Key themes

Awareness and understanding of the 12 new housing requirements

Employers

- While most employers (96 percent) were familiar with the requirements, some regions, like Mainland/Southwest, had lower awareness.
- Employers typically learned about these requirements through industry associations (69 percent) or the engagement survey (29 percent).
- Similarly, the agricultural industry association members who participated in the interviews reported that employers find the requirements vague. Communication has mainly come from associations like Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI) and BC Agriculture Council (BCAC)¹, with little communication from ESDC.

Organizations directly supporting temporary foreign workers

- Organizations supporting temporary foreign workers were aware of the requirements but found them unclear, with some recently learning about them through webinars and discussions.
- Representatives from a union and a union coalition had limited awareness of the requirements.

Temporary foreign workers

- Temporary foreign workers were generally unaware of housing standards and often only sought help during crises such as abuse or lack of water.
- Union representatives reported that workers, particularly those on shorter-term permits, often lacked knowledge about their housing rights.
- While some gained awareness through workshops or projects, most accepted less than ideal conditions without understanding their rights.
- Consulates reported that many new workers were unaware of housing standards and feared retaliation or being banned from returning if they spoke up.

¹ The Western Agriculture Labour Initiative (WALI) is a subsidiary of the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) that supports producers in streamlining temporary foreign worker program applications and associated Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA). WALI also holds the list of qualified housing inspectors that producers must contract for their housing inspection as part of their program application package.

- Temporary foreign workers have typically heard about the requirements through consulates or informal networks, with varying information sources and levels of awareness.

Union representatives and consulates called for increasing employer awareness of the changes to housing standards. Worker representatives advocated for clear and consistent communication from government agencies (ESDC, provincial ministries) to workers and employers. Consulates also suggested involving appropriate consulates in housing standards training and ensuring migrant workers receive the necessary care and support.

Housing conditions

Employers

Most employers (88 percent) provide on-site housing. Only employers responding from the Mainland/Southwest and Vancouver Island/Coast provided off-site housing.

Most of the employers who responded to the survey believe they are already meeting the majority of the new housing requirements. For 10 of the 12 requirements, over 90% of respondents indicated they were already meeting the requirements. In contrast, 10 percent of respondents were uncertain about water supply requirements, and 8 percent were uncertain about heating and ventilation requirements. Notably, 4 percent of employers self-reported that they are not meeting water supply requirements. Two percent (each) self-reported that they did not meet requirements for convenient facilities, heating and ventilation, and pest control.

Regarding the requirements currently going unmet, employers listed the following barriers:

- **Water supply:** the suggestion of 20 gallons per person was considered too high to reasonably meet. Additionally, some employers were concerned over a lack of space to fit the size/number of tanks listed in the requirement.
- **Convenient facilities:** kitchens and bathrooms are currently detached, posing issues with convenience and accessibility.
- **Heating & ventilation:** one employer mentioned lacking the cooling systems necessary to fulfill climate control requirements.
- **Pest control:** existing windows and screens require upgrades to prevent pest intrusion.
- **Furniture and equipment:** one employer mentioned that the beds are situated only six inches off the floor, falling short of compliance standards.
- **Personal space:** one employer reported workers sleeping in bunk beds.

- **Building integrity:** the interviewed industry association noted that on-site modular housing was structurally sound but many rented units were substandard. Employers recognized the need for upgrades.
- **Inspections:** one employer suggested unannounced inspections and the industry association suggested mid-season inspections to address issues that arise after initial inspections.

Organizations directly supporting temporary foreign workers and union representatives

Respondents reported that temporary foreign workers often face overcrowding, poor maintenance, and lack of basic amenities. Many live in cramped spaces with inconsistent access to water, ventilation, and sanitation. They commonly experience pest infestations, broken waste systems, and poor fire safety equipment. Communication barriers, such as unreliable internet and lack of phones, further isolate workers. Inadequate cooking facilities and poor hygiene contribute to health risks, and healthcare access is often limited due to lack of transportation and employer support. See below for an overview of issues per requirement:

- **Water supply:** water was not a common complaint, but some organizations reported bad-tasting water or not enough water at times of high-demand, leading to late-night showers or doing laundry at night when workers start early the next day.
- **Heat and ventilation:** organizations mentioned inconsistent building temperatures, no air conditioning, and inadequate fans, leading to some even sleeping outside in summer.
- **Building integrity:** housing was noted as overcrowded and poorly maintained, including rotting structures, trailers, and non-residential spaces being used as homes. One of the worker unions noted that on-site modular housing was structurally sound, but many rented units were substandard.
- **Chemical equipment and storage:** chemical safety was not a major concern for workers, though some mentioned the need for safety information in their language and better storage practices near living areas.
- **Water and waste systems:** workers at larger employers had proper water and waste systems, but smaller employers had problems like broken toilets and overflowing septic systems, with workers expected to resolve these issues themselves.
- **Fire safety:** fire safety equipment was often old or broken, and workers were unaware of how to use it, with some fire alarms not working and no fire plans in Spanish. Union representatives found fire safety to be inconsistent, outlining poor stove conditions and emergency exit issues.

- **Pest control:** pests like rodents, cockroaches, and bedbugs were common in workers' housing, with employers often failing to address the issues. Union representatives also found pest control responses to be inconsistent; for example, pest control is usually a high priority when it could jeopardize crop safety and production.
- **Lighting:** workers reported poor lighting, especially in units with no windows. Dark outdoor paths and bathrooms also create hazards. Union representatives found on-site housing usually had adequate lighting.
- **Furniture and equipment:** workers often had little to no furniture, reporting second-hand or makeshift items, sometimes with bedbugs. Union representatives noted that employers sometimes staged better furnishings before inspections.
- **Convenient facilities:** only about half of employers provided enough shared facilities. Workers noted insufficient showers, long distances to bathrooms (outdoor paths) and limited fridge and stove access. Union representatives also found kitchens and bathrooms inadequate.
- **Personal space:** overcrowding and lack of privacy were significant issues for workers, with many sharing rooms and sleeping in bunk beds. Union representatives reported that personal space standards were often unmet. Consulates mentioned an instance where a sleeping space was separated by curtains, and settlement and advocacy organizations mentioned workers using blankets or cardboards around bunk beds to claim some personal space.
- **Inspections:** workers felt inspections were often staged and lacked private opportunities for workers to talk to inspectors. Some employers coached workers on what to say, and complaints were not always followed up on. Union representatives emphasized the need for unannounced inspections and better worker awareness of how to file complaints.

Organizations supporting temporary foreign workers found that housing conditions were reported to vary widely between different employers, with some employers, especially larger ones with more employees, providing acceptable accommodations, while others offering substandard housing. Some employers may misuse subsidized low-income housing, displacing local communities and creating insecurity for workers. Inspections often fail to reflect actual conditions due to staged reviews, and smaller employers are less likely to invest in improvements. Follow-up on issues is inconsistent, with many employers either ignoring or downplaying concerns.

Power imbalance

Across **union representatives, organizations and consulates who support temporary foreign workers**, power imbalances and fear of retaliation were major concerns.

Temporary foreign workers experience a significant power imbalance with employers, which creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. Workers are often afraid to report

illness or injury because they fear being fired or deported. This fear is exacerbated by the belief that their complaints will not be believed or supported. Workers have even faced threats to discourage them from complaining. The fear of retaliation, including being blacklisted or denied future work, further discourages workers from speaking out. This vulnerability to exploitation is made worse by employers sometimes delaying or refusing to take workers to medical appointments, particularly in remote areas, leaving workers to rely on consulates or third parties to arrange transportation to clinics or hospitals. Workers may also feel pressured to accept poor living conditions or assume that these are normal due to the lack of support, lack of transparency, or fear of repercussions.

Additionally, employers impose various personal restrictions on workers, such as curfews, limitations on visitors, and even prohibiting certain activities like drinking alcohol. These restrictions, though often not within their legal authority, serve to increase workers' dependence on employers, further solidifying the power imbalance. This structure of control extends to workers' daily lives, including limited access to services, transportation, and communication. Workers often have no confidentiality when reporting issues (e.g. abuse, unsafe housing, health hazards, workplace injuries, or even accessing first aid), which results in underreporting injuries and health problems. This power dynamic fosters a culture of silence, where workers feel unable to speak out due to fear of retaliation or losing their job.

Power imbalance: gendered considerations

Consulates and **union representatives** mentioned few current gender-specific issues; however, they did note instances physical abuse and sexist behavior including a supervisor trying to remove a pregnant worker from her job without pay.

Organizations who support temporary foreign workers mentioned significant gendered issues related to health and safety that exacerbated the existing power imbalances, particularly for women.

- **Surveillance and control:** many women workers face extreme surveillance and severe restrictions to movement, such as limited or no access to transportation (for example, not being allowed to drive) compared to their male counterparts, being locked in rooms at night, being forbidden to leave the property, being forbidden from having visitors, attending church, being in relationships, or associating with men. Women are more likely to be presumed or accused of doing sex work if they leave the property. Because sex work is illegal under their visa, such accusations are an implied threat of deportation. Women are also threatened with being sent home if they complain.
- **Violence, assault and harassment:** violence, assault, and harassment from employers, supervisors, and other workers are reportedly common, and women

are often punished by employers for refusing relationships or sexual advances. Job loss is a major fear, especially for workers who are perceived by employers as less attractive, because younger and physically attractive women were more likely to be transferred to new jobs after the season ended.

- **Sexual and reproductive health constraints:** workers must tolerate a sexualized and gendered control over their healthcare access; it was reported that women face challenges accessing healthcare and faced particular adversity related to sexual and reproductive health. For example, employers sometimes refused to take them to doctors, pressured them to get abortions, and attempted to restrict pregnancy. Pregnancy is often considered problematic, and pregnant workers risk losing their job. Organizations reported that nurses and healthcare workers providing health information for workers were also disallowed on the property. Workers also face a lack of access to menstrual care products, privacy, and mental health support.
- **Gendered living and working conditions:** overcrowding in housing and violations of privacy are widespread. Women often work longer hours, live farther from their work sites, and face real wage differences.
- **Gendered men's experience:** men experience fear of job loss as well, but it is less likely that they will be replaced as quickly as women. Additionally, organizations reported that men lack education about parental rights and consequently miss opportunities for paid leave.

There were no comments about queer people or people of other genders.

Support needed

Funding

Employers

From the survey, employers raised concerns about increased operating expenses and loss of revenue that might affect their ability to meet the new housing requirements. Seventeen percent of employers reported that infrastructure limitations hinder their ability to meet requirements. Employers mentioned that older housing was expensive to retrofit, and some units lacked adequate electrical capacity for air conditioning or other amenities. Other employers rent housing and are unable to make structural changes, limiting their ability to comply with new standards. Similarly, 9 percent of employers mentioned that there is not enough funding to keep up with changing regulations as housing costs continue to rise due to increasing regulations, without a proportionate increase in revenue.

Additionally, for the employers who indicated not currently meeting the requirements, cost was the largest barrier to potentially not being able to meet the new requirements (69 percent). Although most employers not currently meeting the requirements have

expressed that they are planning to meet these requirements by 2027, some (4 percent) reported that they would have to do major upgrades.

When employers were asked to rank additional support or resources they may need to help follow the new housing requirements, funding was the most critical area of support, with 64 percent ranking it as their top need. The industry association interviewed also raised concerns about whether current investments will meet future federal standards.

Organizations directly supporting temporary foreign workers

Similarly, organizations who support temporary foreign workers also called for an increase in funding flexibility for support programs, specifically for stable, long-term funding to groups that offer direct services rather than just advocacy; for example, to provide services like outreach and support to workers outside of regular work hours. These organizations also emphasized that collaboration should be encouraged over competition for funding.

Communication and awareness

Across all respondents, low awareness of requirements and workers' rights, often due to language barriers, was commonly reported, and solutions were recommended. Five areas were mentioned to improve communication and awareness:

Language and information barriers

Participants raised concerns about significant language and information barriers that hinder effective communication between workers and health care providers or employers. In addition, many temporary foreign workers do not know how to access emergency services or navigate complex systems like workers' compensation or government agencies. Language accessibility during inspections is crucial so workers understand what is happening. Engagement participants, especially organizations that support temporary foreign workers, recommended these improvements:

- Provide translated documents in multiple languages
- Use plain language that breaks down complex information into small, digestible messages
- Tailor communication to workers' preferences using:
 - Familiar platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and social media
 - Ensure accessibility across age groups and devices like smartphones
- Use non-traditional support methods:
 - Interpreters
 - Written materials
 - Multilingual social media campaigns

- Install information boards in housing accommodations with:
 - Emergency procedures
 - Safety box locations
 - Contact details for support services

Facility use and cleaning

One of the union representatives (coalition of unions) and consulates emphasized that employers should be more committed to providing, both before and during the season, clear information and training on:

- Use and maintenance of appliances like washers, dryers, air conditioning, and heating systems
- Fire safety

Employers also noted a lack of knowledge around sewage and garbage disposal, recycling, or septic system care.

Community organization & employer collaboration

Participants recommended allowing organizations to visit workers at their homes or workplaces to significantly increase support services access. They advised that practical welcome resources should be provided, such as:

- Guides on how to apply for Medical Services Plans, Social Insurance Numbers, and other essentials
- Lists of required documents and where to get help

Complaint mechanisms

Complaint mechanisms must be:

- Easy to access
- Multilingual
- Clearly explained
- Include options like hotlines and online submissions

Compliance and enforcement

Employers

One employer suggested that housing enforcement should occur more consistently, particularly through unannounced inspections. The industry association interviewed also mentioned that inspection gaps, particularly the lack of mid-season inspections, allow for housing conditions to deteriorate without follow-up audits. They suggested mid-season inspections as a key change to ensure ongoing compliance and address issues that arise

after initial inspections. Additionally, the industry association mentioned that employers support the idea of provincial oversight or authorization of inspectors to ensure consistency and accountability.

Some employers also mentioned accountability and discipline challenges with temporary foreign workers and personality clashes. An employer reported damage to property (for example, broken screens, tampering with smoke detectors) and felt that disciplinary measures are difficult to enforce and often lack consequences.

Organizations directly supporting temporary foreign workers

Compliance and enforcement were identified as critical themes, particularly regarding inspections, employer accountability, and complaint processes.

Organizations, union representatives and consulates raised concerns about gaps in inspections, noting that the inspections are often staged for pre-arrival and there are few surprise or mid-season checks. Inspections involve private inspectors paid by employers and recommended by employer associations, creating perceived conflicts of interest. Inspections were described as inconsistent, with only select units checked. Even when sites pass inspection, later photos may reveal substandard conditions. Organizations that support temporary foreign workers stressed the importance of unannounced inspections with full access to worksites and housing, along with regular follow-ups and random spot checks to ensure ongoing compliance.

There was a strong call for uniform inspection standards across provinces, with suggestions to shift responsibility to neutral bodies like the Ministry of Health and to harmonize protocols between the Ministries of Labour and Health. Inspectors must be well trained in labour laws and workers' rights, and the process must be accessible in multiple languages. Worker support organizations also emphasized the need for their active participation during inspections and investigations to improve transparency, as workers often feel excluded.

To strengthen enforcement, settlement organizations and advocacy groups called for more attention to employer registration and regular updates of worker lists. Settlement and advocacy organizations and consulates noted that clear penalties for non-compliance, such as fines or suspensions, are crucial, especially given the lack of follow-up on violations and the continued placement of workers with problematic employers, even after consular opposition. Participants noted the absence of public listings of non-compliant employers, contributing to uneven enforcement where some employers are regularly inspected while others are never checked.

The complaint process must be easy to access, multilingual, and safe, with whistleblower protections and legal support for workers who report violations. There was a strong call

for workers to have a safe and accessible way to report violations without fear of retaliation. Consular site visits have revealed discrepancies, reinforcing the need for reliable mechanisms to raise concerns and ensure that violations are addressed, and workers' rights are protected.

Discrepancies in findings

A clear difference was seen between the findings from employers and those who directly support temporary foreign workers. While employers generally reported currently meeting most of the upcoming requirements, organizations (specifically advocacy organizations, settlement services organizations, union representatives and consulates) described more challenges, including issues with current housing conditions and worker vulnerability.

Employers

- Most of the employers who responded to the survey believe they are already meeting most of the new housing requirements. For 10 of the 12 requirements, over 90% of respondents indicated compliance.

Organizations supporting temporary foreign workers

- Organizations describe current conditions as overcrowded, poorly maintained, and lacking basic amenities. Many workers live in cramped spaces with inconsistent access to water, ventilation, and sanitation. Common issues include pest infestations, broken waste systems, and poor fire safety equipment. Communication barriers, such as unreliable internet and lack of phones, further isolate workers. Inadequate cooking facilities and poor hygiene contribute to health risks, and healthcare access is often limited due to lack of transportation and employer support.
- Despite that, they also described some employers, mostly larger companies, meeting requirements and maintaining good housing conditions in terms of building, communication technology, proximity to retail stores and convenience of facilities (for example, bedrooms close to bathrooms).

The following factors may help explain the main discrepancies between employers and those who support temporary foreign workers throughout the report:

Different perspectives and priorities (roles and responsibilities):

- Advocacy and settlement services organizations most often interact with temporary foreign workers when problems arise. As a result, they typically receive reports and instances of non-compliance, mistreatment or unmet needs.
- Employers typically respond from the standpoint of their own operations and may not observe situations outside of that. Additionally, workers may not feel comfortable raising issues with employers, limiting their awareness of concerns that workers do not disclose. This further amplifies the discrepancy in what each group observes.

Response bias in employer survey:

- Employers who believe they are compliant may have been more likely to respond to the survey compared to employers who do not. Those who do not may have opted not to participate in the survey. This skew in participation contributes to the more favorable employer-reported outcomes.