

Partnership for Citrus Worker Health Project
Community Advisory Committee

The Partnership for Citrus Worker Health was first convened by the Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) and faculty from the Florida Prevention Research Center at the University of South Florida (FPRC). Participation is voluntary and the bi-monthly meetings are held at the FWAF office on Main Street and are open to the community. A meal is always served prior to the meetings, which usually begin at 7:00 PM. Meetings usually last from 90 minutes to two hours. Representatives from all sectors of the immigrant and agricultural communities in the Immokalee area have been invited and attendees have included persons with expertise in the public housing sector, immigrant head start and education, agricultural industries, public health, labor regulation, and faith-based community organizing. The majority of participants come from the citrus worker community. Translation is provided in Spanish, English and Creole.

All issues are decided by consensus and anyone from the community attending a meeting is allowed to vote and make their voices heard. Members of the FPRC and the Association do not vote. Voting is done using a method called “Fist to Five” which gives each participant five votes (one for each finger) to indicate their level of support and an opportunity to completely oppose decisions by raising their fist. Discussion is open and eventually consensus is reached. The FPRC and the FWAF decide on an agenda, such as research strategies, structuring the board, and deciding on a mission statement for the project and then they provide moderation and facilitation during the meeting. Regular attendees are contacted by phone and through visits before each meeting to discuss the agenda and provide feedback. Members of the citrus worker community usually meet separately during the week prior to the board meetings in order to become familiar with the issues.

The board was consulted extensively on whether to change the structure and give community members more control through committees and elected officers. Through consensus they agreed that they were comfortable with the current structure as voting members of an advisory board that directs the activities of the FWAF and the FPRC. All members of the board continue to provide research assistance and access to their institutions and personal networks.

The following meeting rules were decided by the board and are reviewed at the start of each meeting.

1. When speaking, respect the translators and give them enough time to translate.
2. Respect everyone even when we don't agree with his or her opinion.
3. Limit your time when speaking to give everyone a chance to talk.
4. Keep discussion limited only to the topic being discussed.
5. Respect the moderator.
6. Turn off cellular phones and beepers.