WORKFORCE
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

By 2026, nearly 25 percent of the U.S. workforce will be 55 and older (BLS). The agricultural and food sectors hold more than 21 million full and part-time jobs, and that number continues to rise annually (ERS). This means that in less than nine years, more than 5.35 million jobs will be available in the agriculture and food sectors.

TOP LINE

NASDA is committed to working with the federal government and private industry to identify and address agricultural workforce challenges.

NASDA encourages the federal government to recognize career pathways in the food, agriculture and natural resource industries and make necessary investments in these focus areas to develop a secure, reliable workforce.

NASDA seeks to address agricultural workforce across the spectrum of production, from harvesting to research.

Labor and Immigration:

Any legislation must include assurance of a future workforce from both a flexible and efficient visa program and by retention of current workers. A legislative solution must address:

• Respect for and recognition of the importance of our current experienced workforce to the sustainability of US-based agricultural production and food security
• A mechanism to earn legal status based on agriculture work experience
• Availability to work in all types of agriculture, not limited to seasonality
• A market-based approach to wages
• Ability to meet expanding labor needs without arbitrary limits

Connections to STEM Careers

• Classroom Education: NASDA supports the expansion of the school-based agricultural education that aligns with the Agricultural, Food and Natural Resource (AFNR) content standards

Work Based Training & Certifications:

• NASDA encourages the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education to work with NASDA and the agriculture industry at large to expand work-based training, including apprenticeships and micro-credentials to address skilled and unskilled labor shortages.
Agency Collaboration:
- The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Labor and Education must collaborate to create standards, platforms and resources that address workforce needs.

Youth Leadership & Community Development
- NASDA supports community and youth development that encourages awareness and understanding of the agriculture, food and natural resources industries and their potential career opportunities. Organizations such as 4-H and the National FFA Organization play a key role in developing tomorrow’s workforce.

Redefine Agricultural Employment
- To better understand the breadth, depth and scope of the agriculture, food and natural resource sectors through data analysis and to promote employment within the sector, NASDA seeks to redefine “agricultural employment” under the Fair Labor Standards Act and “agricultural labor” under the Internal Revenue Code. A new definition will better reflect today’s mechanized and advancing industry while expanding its statistical impacts.

RURAL AMERICA

Rural America continues to see high migration of young adults. Low wages and career limitations continue to push individuals into urban areas. As we invest in education and jobs catered to all skill-sets, marketability of Rural America as a manufacturing destination provides new opportunities for rural economic development. Additionally, partnerships between education and industry give young people the chance to earn a living in rural communities.