

H-2A Visa Program in Haiti



Worker Recruitment Services

International Organization for Migration - Mission in Haiti



PROGRAM PARTNERS



International Organization for Migration (IOM), Haiti. Established in 1951, IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.



US Association for International Migration (USAIM), Washington DC. As a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the U.S. Association for International Migration (USAIM) seeks to empower migrants. Through outreach, education, and fundraising USAIM aims to raise awareness about the reality of migration while encouraging positive action. USAIM supports programs of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) related to counter-trafficking, emergency relief, and migrant health.



Protect the People (PTP), Washington DC. PTP is a network of professionals working to protect people affected by conflict and disaster. PTP provides technical experts to humanitarian agencies, fosters private sector partnerships for humanitarian response, and conducts training in protection for governments and the security sector. PTP has a network of fifty experts who speak eighteen languages and have worked in over eighty countries. PTP works closely with United Nations agencies, the U.S. Government, and non-governmental organizations throughout the world.



Center for Global Development (CGD), Washington DC. CGD is the only research institute in Washington, DC - and now also in London - with a singular focus on development seen through the multiple facets of migration, aid, trade, debt, climate change, global health, education, and population. CGD combines rigorous research with strategic outreach and communications aimed at both informing and promoting meaningful policy change. Research and policy outreach conducted by CGD was influential in instigating the US government to extend the H-2 visa opportunity to Haitians in early 2012.



National Office for Migration (ONM), Haiti. ONM is a specialized implementing agency within Haiti's Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST) with a mandate to receive and process migrants in need of assistance and formulate migration policy recommendations.



Ministry of Agriculture (MARNDR), Haiti. The involvement of Ministry of Agriculture has been instrumental in gathering useful data on industry outputs and potential source communities during the pre-selection stage.



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Dear Prospective Client,

We hope that you will find this concise reference guide on the temporary Haitian agricultural worker services offered by IOM a useful resource that will help you make an informed decision when contracting a well-trained labor force.



Facilitation of circular labor migration is one of IOM’s mainstay activities. As a global humanitarian and policy-setting organization in the field of migration, IOM’s purpose in labor migration is to facilitate the development of policies and programs that can individually and mutually benefit the concerned governments, migrants and societies. Under this mandate, IOM has implemented a number of similar programs worldwide, sourcing workers from Colombia, Ghana, Mauritius, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador to destination countries such as Canada, Spain, Italy and Portugal. This experience leads us to believe that the success of the temporary contractual employment cycle requires a holistic approach that:

1. Guarantees ethical recruitment of migrant workers;
2. Protects workers from all forms of exploitation;
3. Guarantees fair and safe working conditions
4. Prepares workers for their return after they fulfill the terms of their contract;
5. Helps workers reintegrate successfully in their home communities.

In the past 20 years of working in Haiti, we have witnessed some of the most challenging times in the country’s history. After the devastating earthquake of January 2010, which was the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the Western Hemisphere on record, our organization joined hands with the Haitian government and the international community to deliver relief to thousands of affected families. This was done through a number of ways, including health assistance, counselling, distribution of critical supplies, women and child protection, rehousing assistance for over 55,000 families, as well as coordination of the overall humanitarian response in internal displacement camps. Since that time, Haiti has come a long way. Along with the housing and infrastructure sectors, the agricultural sector is increasingly better managed.



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In 2012, the US government put Haiti on the list of eligible countries for the H-2 Visa, offering a unique potential for direct economic benefit for qualified applicants. In 2014, the Government of Haiti appointed IOM as an official recruiter of H-2A visa workers. To fully reap the benefits of organized temporary labor migration, there is a need for effective policies, response mechanisms and adequate institutional capacity. To this end, IOM initiated a consultative process with the Government of Haiti through the H-2 visa Task Force, which includes the National Office for Migration, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Directorate of Immigration and Emigration, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The objective of this Task Force is to reinforce good practices in seasonal agricultural recruitment by introducing a Government-led transparent mechanism for beneficiary selection, follow-up and continued liaison. Through dedicated efforts, the project team has built working relationships with members of the Task Force, the Embassy of the United States in Port-au-Prince, US-based partners, including employer associations and the National Council of Agricultural Employers (NCAE). Thanks to existing donor funds, made possible through a charitable donation facilitated by USAIM, resources for staff and operations have been secured through 2015, making most of the services detailed here available at no cost to both, the Worker and the Employer.

IOM and its partners are standing by to provide you with the highest industry standards of client-focused service. Our dedicated Labor Migration unit has conducted a number of field assessments, connecting with local agricultural cooperatives and gathering data in response to specific employer interest. It is our hope that you will find these efforts useful and recognize this rare competitive opportunity.

Should you have any questions, or would like to receive a tailored information package suitable to your needs, please do not hesitate to get in touch with my colleagues referenced at the end of this booklet.

Gregoire Goodstein
Chief of Mission
International Organization for Migration
Port-au-Prince, Haiti



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WHO WE ARE

About IOM

IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration management and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM works with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration and uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants. IOM works on a not-for-profit basis funded by the international donor community. In accordance with its Constitution, IOM provides professional, efficient and transparent recruitment services in both countries of origin and destination. To date, IOM has facilitated the recruitment and employment of over 10,000 temporary migrant workers from Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia and Mauritius destined for Canadian, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese companies in the agricultural and food processing sectors. IOM has proven itself as a valuable partner for private employers willing to address labor shortages through the employment of foreign workers.

With more than 8,400 operational staff working across 480 field locations in over 150 countries, IOM is well positioned to expand employers' recruitment schemes at a global level. IOM is able to provide detailed insight into foreign labor markets, and offers a suite of complementary services for employers including: outreach and recruitment of suitable workers; visa processing assistance; pre-departure training; key resource materials for both workers and employers; travel arrangements; transit, post-arrival and return assistance; and return assistance.

Organizational Structure

Headquartered in Geneva, IOM's structure is highly decentralized, enabling the Organization to acquire the capacity closer to where the needs are in order to effectively deliver an ever-increasing number of diverse projects at the request of its Member States and partners. IOM's Field structure is composed of:



IOM Headquarters in Geneva



IOM compound in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

- **9 Regional Offices** (Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; Cairo, Egypt; Pretoria, South Africa; San José, Costa Rica; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bangkok, Thailand; Brussels, Belgium; Vienna, Austria), which formulate regional strategies and plans of action to provide programmatic and administrative support to the Country Offices within their regions;
- **2 Administrative Centers** (Manila and Panama), which provide administrative services to IOM's network of offices;
- **2 Special Liaison Offices** (New York, USA, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), which strengthen relations with specific multilateral bodies, diplomatic missions, and nongovernmental organizations;
- **9 Country Offices with resource mobilization and**

coordinating functions, which ensure effective fundraising and liaison with donors and have the additional responsibility to ensure that migratory realities within a defined cluster of countries are taken into account in the programmatic activities of the region;

- **481 Country Offices and sub-offices**, which implement a wide range of projects addressing specific migration needs.



- e) Awareness-raising on the “temporary and circular labor migration concept” and the importance of returning home upon completion of the contract.
6. IOM liaises with the Consular section of the US Embassy for individual interviews and accompanies workers to the Embassy. The Consular Section has already informed IOM that it is willing to expedite the visa process for H-2A workers;
 7. Once workers are notified of the outcome of the interview, IOM communicates this information to PTP, Employers and Haitian Government Authorities. IOM facilitates departure arrangements for the workers;
 8. Approved workers are met by the liaison officer of the relevant Haitian Consulate and PTP staff, accompanied en route to job sites and settled.
 9. The liaison officers of the relevant Haitian Consulate liaise with workers and employers, and other relevant offices, to ensure a smooth working experience for all the parties involved. The liaison officers of the relevant Haitian Consulate accompany the workers to the place of departure once the Visa has expired.



WHAT WE OFFER

Ethical and Competitive Worker Recruitment Services:

Ensuring legal transparency and full accountability to the workers, IOM does not charge beneficiaries for participating in the program at any point in the process. Thanks to an existing donation dedicated to the program, IOM is able to deliver most of the below services at absolutely no cost to the Employer through 2015.

1. Pre-Selection (at no cost to Employer):

- a. Interview and assessment of applicants;
- b. Document verification;
- c. Pre-selection medical examinations by trained IOM health professionals;
- d. Pre-selection of individual candidates registered to meet profile provided by the Employer.

2. Selection (at no cost to Employer):

- a. Employer shares the job order;
- b. Based on a specific job order IOM conducts a transparent selection process ;
- c. Logistical arrangements by IOM for the final selection team of the Employer;
- d. Logistical arrangements by IOM for the final medical screening by the Employer's medical team.

3. Pre-departure (at no cost to Employer):

- a. Pre-departure orientation tailored to the job order, skills required, tools and processes employed;
- b. (Optional) involvement of the employer in designing and delivering the orientation;
- c. Cultural and behavioural essentials;
- d. Fast-track language training;
- e. Familiarization with relevant requirements of the US law;
- f. Transportation and assembly of workers to pre-identified accommodation center provided by the National Office for Migration;
- g. Visa processing (including medical assessment for visa purposes).

4. Travel and Transit Assistance (transportation costs paid by Employer)¹:

- a. IOM negotiates reduced fares with airline companies;
- b. Departure and transit assistance from country of origin to selected closest airport in country of destination.

5. Reception, Post-Arrival and Employment (at no cost to Employer):

- a. Accompany workers at pick-up upon arrival to work sites with continued liaison support during the first days after settlement;
- b. Information on existing remittances services and other services to contribute to the development of the country / community of origin;
- c. Liaison with Embassy and Consulates of Haiti as well as with the Employer's association;
- d. Liaison with Employer and workers on a regular basis;

¹ Depending on the number of workers required and destination, an average USD 800 return flight cost per worker should be noted. Internal transportation costs (airport pickup and transportation by bus) should be added. IOM and PTP will provide accompaniment and coordination support at no charge to the Employer.

- e. Full-time language interpretation accompaniment with each crew;
- f. Document verification;
- g. Information provision to family in country of origin.

6. Return and Reintegration (at no cost to employer):

- a. Incentives for return:
 - i. Opportunity for repeat participation in the H-2A visa program;
- b. Reintegration in the country and community of origin (link between migration and development):
 - i. Community development projects implemented by IOM in Haiti.

Relationship with Farmer Cooperatives

Following consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and several pre-screening field assessments, the IOM team focused on three worker source areas with well-organized presence of farmer cooperatives: Kenscoff, Cap Haitien and Gros-Morne. Over the course of 2014, IOM had built strong working relationships with three cooperatives detailed below. Several follow-up visits were conducted with each farmer cooperative. Their representatives were engaged in the H-2A visa workshop held in Port-au-Prince between November 3-4, 2014. The pre-selected members of cooperatives have been briefed about the existing H-2A visa system through information sessions covering the conditions for participation, including essential legal and logistical issues.

Worker Profile and Source Locations

Vegetable production is an essential part of Haiti’s primarily agriculture-based economy. Species such as sweet potato, red and black beans, cabbage, manioc, plantain, okra, and tomatoes are almost entirely grown for domestic consumption. As methods of cultivation, gardening and terracing is widely practiced in the mountainous surroundings of Port-au-Prince, as well as in Gros Cheval, Oranie and the irrigated plains of Artibonite and Les Cayes. Haitian agricultural workers are experienced farmers cultivating plots ranging in size from 0.04 to 0.30 ha. A farmer may have several plots, which may also contain greenhouses. Cultivation and harvesting is mainly done by hand utilizing simple tools like machete, knife, and pruning knife. The farmers are mainly men, while women sell fruits vegetables in local markets. The majority of farmers have completed several years in school. Haitian agricultural workers often form cooperatives and associations. The program has engaged three such cooperatives: SOHADERK, FECCANO and COPAGM.



Above locations: Cap Haitien, Gros Morne, Kencoff. Image credit: Google.



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I. Kenscoff, West Department, Haiti

Organization: SOHADERK (Haitian Solidarity for Rural Development of Kenscoff)

Membership: Over 6700 individual vegetable farmers.

Known for: The cooperative was founded in 1995. Has a long-standing relationship with the Agricultural Faculty of the University of Idaho. At the moment, the cooperative has 6,794 active members, mainly small farmers specialized in vegetable gardening and production of potato, tomato, lettuce, carrot, peanut, green bean, guava, coffee and flour. SOHADERK has 3 nurseries and 36 greenhouses supported by USAID to meet the needs of its members. The association has a peanut butter manufacturing unit donated by French organization AVSF. Their entire product line is successfully marketed and sold under the brand 'Chanpyon'. **130 members of SOHADERK have been pre-selected** for participation in the H2-A visa program facilitated by IOM.



Above: members of the SOHADERK agricultural cooperative.



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2. Cap Haitien, North Department, Haiti

Organization: FECCANO (Federation of Cocoa Producers in Northern Haiti)

Membership: Over 2,500 cocoa farmers.

Known for: High grade fair trade-certified cocoa exports. The federation includes seven cooperatives of cocoa producers in the North (CAFIPBO, CAPB, CAPUP, SOCOSPOC, SOCAT, CAJBC, and KOTAM). It currently has over 2,500 members. FECCANO is governed by a board of seven members with the main objective to improve the economic outlook for their members and local communities. FECCANO organizes variety of trainings and educational trips for their members in order to improve their technical and business management capacities. Although cocoa production is the main activity and source of income for most of the farmers, they also grow other fruits and vegetables such as citruses, banana, potato, green beans and tomato. **40 members have been preselected** for participation in the H2-A visa program run by IOM.



Above: members of the FECCANO agricultural cooperative.



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3. Gros-Morne, Artibonite department, Haiti

Organization: KOPAKGM (Cooperative for Agricultural Production of Gros-Morne)

Membership: Over 1000 farmers

Known for: The cooperative has over 1,000 mango producers. There are over 250,000 mango trees in the area. During the mango harvesting season, there are approximately 7,500 workers involved in gathering the fruit. The Cooperative purchases fresh mango from farmers in the area for resale to exporters. Mango is usually exported to the US and France. COPAGM also sells dried and fresh mango to other cities in the country. In 2010, the Embassy of Canada donated construction material and equipment for a mango drying operation, which employs 25 workers. **30 farmers from KOPAKGM have been pre-selected** for participation in the H-2A visa program facilitated by IOM.



Above: members of the KOPAKGM agricultural cooperative.



Above: meeting with agricultural cooperative SOHADERK, Kenscoff, Haiti.



Above: SOHADERK cooperative members, Kenscoff, Haiti.



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FECCANO workers in the field.





Member of the SOHADERK cooperative presenting the Chanpyon brand.



Participants of the H-2A visa workshop held in Port-au-Prince, November 3-4 2014. Left to right: Cynthia Rathinasamy, Center for Global Development, Washington DC; Lynn Jacques; Dmitry Poletayev, IOM Haiti; Sarah Williamson, Protect the People, Washington DC; Embassy of Haiti in Washington DC, National Office for Migration, Haiti; Ministry of Agriculture, Haiti; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Haiti; Haiti consular representatives from Miami, Boston and New York; directors of SOHADERK, COPAGM and FECCANO, John Young; Mike Gempler, Washington Growers League; Maureen Torrey, Torrey Farms; Frank Gasperini, NCAE; Roberta Romano, Protect the People; Drazan Rozic and Claire Pressoir, IOM Haiti.



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Getting in touch with the program team is easy. We have two dedicated hubs in Washington DC and Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



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