**Event:** California Future of Work Commission Listening Session: Immigrant Worker Service Providers

**Date / Location:** 23 March 2020 / Webinar / 10:00a – 12:00p

**FWC Commissioners Attending:** N/A

**G.O. / LWDA Staff Attending:** Abby Snay, Myke Griseta

**Discussion Summary:** Due to the high volume of participating organizations and the immediacy of concerns associated with the economic fallout stemming from the COVID-19 crisis, the discussion focused on responses to a single question:

*What challenges do the changing nature of work and the changing nature of our economy pose for immigrant workers (including workers who are refugees, day laborers, and/or undocumented), and what are potential responses to those challenges (i.e. policies, programs, direct service interventions)?*

**Summary of Responses:**

- **COVID-19 Impact**
  - Multiple attendees expect the crisis to exacerbate barriers already facing immigrant workers
  - 20,000 jobs already lost in hospitality sector in L.A., largely immigrant workers—many of whom are undocumented and may be on the verge of homelessness
  - Uncertainty for workers who need to accrue work experience (e.g. clinical hours) to attain professional certificates in in-demand health occupations
  - Self-employed workers, particularly drivers and ride-share drivers, are completely out of work; face unclear direction from rideshare companies on UI (UI not accessible to many laid off immigrant workers)
  - It is currently hard to reach students due to gaps in tech literacy and access to technology in immigrant communities; need for more training and access
  - Expected increase in homelessness among day laborers

- **Issues related to working conditions for immigrant workers**
  - Immigrant workers are disproportionately concentrated in occupations in which they are exposed to dangerous health conditions (e.g. pesticides, unsanitary environments) often without proper training or equipment.
  - Gig economy workers do not receive protection under CAL-OSHA
  - Many workers face retaliation for reporting poor working conditions; there is high demand for increased enforcement of labor protections for immigrant workers

- **Other challenges**
  - Immigrant workers who performed skilled work in their home countries face “brain waste” due to working survival jobs to support their families; insufficient pathways for former healthcare workers into healthcare jobs in the U.S.
  - Understanding of and adaptation to U.S. work culture poses a barrier on new immigrant workers
  - Metrics of success for workforce programs do not fully capture the benefits of serving immigrant workers

- **Best Practices, Program Models, Policy Interventions**
  - SEIU United HC Workers West Training and Ed Fund: Apprenticeships into nursing assistant jobs using the I-BEST model (160 hour pre-apprenticeship)
  - Expanded online learning opportunities and technology training (e.g. MS Office)
  - Small business engagement: small businesses as employers for immigrants and refugees
  - Policy recommendation: Collective bargaining bill for non-unionized home healthcare sector to account for low wages, poor job security, and poor working conditions
  - Policy recommendation: Expand EITC eligibility, sick leave, and disability protections for immigrants