

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2026

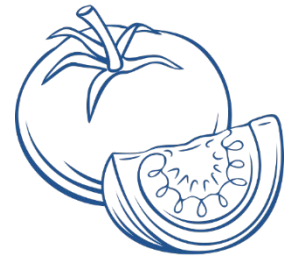


ALRB
AGRICULTURAL LABOR
RELATIONS BOARD

FAIRNESS
IN THE FIELD

Introduction

In 1975 California enacted the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA or the Act), becoming the first state to extend collective bargaining rights to agricultural workers and establishing protections for farmworkers to come together to advocate for better working conditions and protect themselves. The Act created the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB or Board) to oversee administration and enforcement of the Act, including adjudicating labor disputes and conducting union elections.



While many aspects of agricultural labor have evolved significantly during the 50 years since the ALRA's enactment, many have remained the same. The California agricultural industry continues to feed the world and remains heavily dependent on the essential work of farmworkers. Farmwork continues to be extremely labor intensive and poses many hazards for workers. Farmworkers are at the forefront of the harsh impacts of climate change, including hazardous wildfire smoke, extreme heat, drought, and flooding. Farmworkers also are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of pandemics, natural disasters, and economic downturns.

The ALRB has been and continues to be the only state agency with a mission focused entirely on farmworkers. As the needs of the industry and the workforce change, the ALRB strives to evolve and

tailor our services to meet the needs of this critically important workforce.

The ALRB executive team set out to review our operations and develop the first strategic plan for the agency in over a decade. The executive team conducted outreach to gather critically important input from a variety of internal and external stakeholders, but especially from ALRB staff. To this end, the executive team engaged ALRB staff and stakeholders in several surveys and workshops to identify areas where the ALRB should focus its resources and where we could innovate and improve. This Strategic Plan is the result of the invaluable input from staff, employers, unions, policy makers, professional associations, attorneys, community-based organizations, and farmworkers.

The ALRB is committed to its mission and is adopting this Strategic Plan for 2023–26 to guide the Board’s effort to fulfill its vision to be the lead state agency supporting California’s farmworkers.



Mission

The ALRB’s mission, enshrined in Labor Code section 1140.2, is “to encourage and protect the right of agricultural employees to full freedom of association, self-organization, and designation of representatives of their own choosing, to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment, and to be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers, of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives or in self-organization or in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection. For this purpose, this part is adopted to provide for collective-bargaining rights for agricultural employees.”

Vision

The ALRB’s vision is to serve as a trusted state resource for the agricultural community that protects and supports farmworkers’ rights to advocate for better working conditions.



Core Values



Fairness: We recognize the importance of fairness in all of our interactions with the public and with each other. We are committed to being fair and objective in our investigations, elections, and adjudication of cases. We provide everyone with equal access and opportunities.



Responsibility: We are mindful that the actions we take have an impact on people's lives and we take this responsibility seriously. We are entrusted by those we serve to exhibit the highest standards and ethics.



Commitment to Justice: We are entrusted with enforcing the Agricultural Labor Relations Act and ensuring farmworkers have freedom to choose without interference whether they wish to be represented by a union and that they are protected when advocating for better working conditions. We honor that trust and are committed to advancing the public interest and ensuring a just outcome in every case we handle.



Strengthening Communities: We recognize the contributions and value of the public we serve, the organizations that support workers and employers, and the work of other government agencies to serve farmworkers. We value and seek to strengthen our partnerships with farmworkers, employers, unions, community-based organizations, professional associations, attorneys, and government agencies to work together to improve the working conditions of California farmworkers.

Goal 1: Improve the public’s knowledge and understanding of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act and the work of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board.

The ALRB firmly believes that knowledge and awareness of rights and protections are essential to empowering farmworkers. In 2020 the State approved the ALRB’s strategic outreach and communications proposal. The ALRB has since hired outreach staff statewide and is in the process of updating and modernizing its materials. Specifically, the ALRB is updating its outreach materials, its website, and is utilizing additional methods to connect with farmworkers.

Strategic Objectives:

1. **Ensure the ALRB is accessible to the population it serves.**
The ALRB will develop materials and use outreach methods that are accessible in multiple languages and at various literacy levels by using a variety of mediums.
2. **Develop and implement a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy tailored to the farmworker population, including a strategy focused on the growing cannabis industry.**
3. **Increase and maintain relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with a wide variety of organizations including community-based organizations, worker advocacy organizations, unions, employers, professional associations, and other public agencies.**
4. **Increase ALRB visibility to stakeholders.**



Goal 2: Engage and empower ALRB staff.

The ALRB recognizes that its workforce is its most important asset. The ALRB strives to support the needs of our staff, cultivate a positive workplace culture, and be the employer of choice for exceptional public servants.

Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Develop an ALRB workforce development plan that identifies and supports staff training needs, opportunities, and paths for career advancement.**
- 2. Expand the ways the ALRB recognizes staff work and accomplishments.**
- 3. Provide mentorship to staff throughout the organization.**
- 4. Develop a recruitment and retention plan with a focus on specific classifications and geographic areas.**
- 5. Improve internal communication between offices and units regarding regional work.**

Goal 3: Improve the ALRB's services by increasing operational efficiency and effectiveness and maintaining high quality work product.

The ALRB takes its duty to the public and its fiduciary duty as a recipient of state resources seriously. The ALRB's unofficial motto is "small but mighty" and we must continue to develop processes and undertake initiatives to improve the efficiency of the organization and produce work of the highest quality within reasonable time frames.

Strategic Objectives:

- 1. Review, update, and improve timeline goals for all major ALRB case processes including investigations, administrative adjudication, and compliance. Establish routinized monitoring of timelines for all major case handling processes and incorporate changes to improve process times as needed. Ensure all staff members are held accountable for efficient case handling processes.**
- 2. Develop internal repositories of resources for each unit of the ALRB to assist staff in developing their work product, including but not limited to brief banks, templates, and checklists for various work processes. Update ALRB**

procedural manuals to reflect current ALRB case, regulatory, and statutory law. Improve ALRB legal search tools.

3. Identify and incorporate training focused on complex legal and financial schemes used to evade liability or that may interfere with enforcement of remedies. Acquire additional tools to combat complex evasion schemes.
4. Identify and address deficiencies, gaps, and necessary enhancements to the ALRB's case management system, e-Court. Develop a web portal for electronic case, charge, and petition filing and an online case docket.
5. Engage and expand on cross-training with other government agencies and community-based organizations to improve knowledge, utilization, and enforcement of protections of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act.

