



*Illinois Pork Producers.  
Generations of Commitment.*

Producers Resource Guide to Establishing Your International Worker

There are various international recruiting companies that producers can utilize for hiring workers. The purpose of this resource tool is to provide general guidance for how a producer can support their newcomers once they arrive on-site in Illinois. Understand that your contract with various recruiting companies may already include some of the below services and amenities.

Visit the website [Welcome.US | Resources](#) for a list of resources and tools.

If you are just starting to consider hiring an international recruiting service, skip to the end of this webpage for providers.

## **PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING: HOUSING**

Start planning early, prior to your newcomer's arrival. It is industry practice that the producer plan to supply housing for 2 – 3 months of the initial arrival.

- Consider a hotel/motel within the area. Reach out to the manager and explain the situation. Inquire as to what type of long-term stay arrangements can be provided.
- Sublet an apartment. Some communities that are college towns will have short term sublets available. Talk to local landlords to ensure confidence in renting if you have local relationships.
- Support the newcomer in accessing their mailbox. Submit changes of address with the Department of Homeland Security and US Postal Service. Advise newcomers that this will need to be done each time they move.

If utilizing an apartment:

- Ensure that all utilities are connected. Once your newcomer has arrived, enroll into discounted plans for low-income residents, where applicable.
- Furnish the housing with basic furniture. There are many second-hand shops that sell furniture or check with local churches/missions. Post inquires for items via social media platforms.

Provide some basic household goods and food in the housing unit. Assist in identifying the closest grocery store and cultural food shops. Support the newcomer in shopping for clothing, footwear, and other necessities.

Once the newcomer is more established, the producer may need to assist in getting the newcomer a leased apartment and/or loan for a home in the newcomer's name.

## **PRE-ARRIVAL PLANNING: CLOTHING**

Depending on the time of year, the producer may need to take seasonally appropriate clothing to the airport/station. Have your recruiting company obtain the newcomers sizes for coats, boots, and clothing so that these items may be purchased prior to arrival.

## **DAY OF ARRIVAL**

Welcome your newcomer at the airport or station and transport them to the secured housing. Provide initial emergency contact information.

- Provide a ready-to-eat meal.
- Provide a brief orientation to the new living arrangements, including guidance on locks, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and 9-1-1.
- Provide the newcomer with pocket money to support their independence. The producer can talk with the newcomer about the amount that feels appropriate, \$50 is the standard practice.

## **PHONE SERVICE**

Ensure the newcomer has a working phone or understands where a public phone may be accessed if staying in a hotel/motel. Do not anticipate that the newcomer will have a working phone.

- Producer should provide first month of service to the newcomer.
- The newcomer and producer might need to visit a phone store to purchase an inexpensive prepaid cell phone and/or a US sim card.
- It is highly recommended that the producer does not use their phone number as the newcomer's primary number, this will only cause confusion and frustration long-term. The newcomer should only use the producers phone number as an emergency contact.
- WhatsApp is a free app for international calling and texting. However, this app is not feasible for business and civic use.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The producer may need to provide transportation during the first three months of employment. If there is available public transportation, please provide instructions and/or take the transportation together so the newcomer can understand the process. Additionally, consider ridesharing with other workers or ridesharing apps, if available in your location. If these options are not available, the producer may need to consider purchasing a vehicle in which the newcomer can purchase/make affordable payments once established within their surroundings, two to three months after employment began.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**

If utilizing a recruiting company, check with them to verify if they will be assisting with the social security process or if that is the producers responsibly.

Advise your newcomer that they need to apply for a social security number (SSN) as soon as possible. Your newcomer may know nothing about obtaining an SSN as it is unique to the United States. In many situations, the producer will need to take the newcomer to the local office and assist with completing the necessary forms. [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

All forms are available in Spanish. To apply for a SSN, the newcomer will need:

- Parent's complete names
- i94 (if included in Visa documentation)
- Job and petition letters
- Passport/Visa/Sealed Birth Certificate
- Picture ID (can be Mexican ID)
- SS-5 application for SSN (can be downloaded from internet in English or Spanish. It is not required the newcomer complete this form prior to the office visit but will assist in speeding up the process.) [Solicitud para una tarjeta de Seguro Social \(ssa.gov\)](http://Solicitud para una tarjeta de Seguro Social (ssa.gov))

Typically, it will take 2 – 5 weeks to receive your SSN card in the mail. Once the newcomer has submitted their application for a new SSN, the social security office can issue a receipt stating the new card has been requested. This receipt verifies the application has been submitted and approved and that the newcomer will be receiving a new SSN. In short, it acts as a temporary social security card.

Producers can find more information online at: [The United States Social Security Administration | SSA](http://The United States Social Security Administration | SSA) or call 1-800-772-1213 during the working hours of 7am – 7pm, Monday through Friday.

## ILLINOIS DRIVER'S LICENSE

If your newcomer has a driver's license from their country, they may drive on this license for 90-days. All TN candidates during their Visa process are requested to have, or acquire, a valid Mexican driver's license before traveling. Once your newcomer has received their social security card, they may apply for an Illinois driver's license. The temporary card is not accepted at Illinois Motor Vehicle offices. The expiration of the driver's license will be tied to the expiration date of their Visa/i94 paperwork.

- To apply for a driver's license, newcomers should visit the local Department of Motor Vehicles office. Applicants are required to pass written and driving tests and an eye examination.
- In Illinois, a Spanish version of the written test is provided. If a person needs a translator, they must bring their own translator.
- Illinois requires that a person present their valid foreign passport with most recent i94 or their EAD (Employment Authorization Document), Social Security card and one document proving Illinois residency. Only original documents are accepted. Link to acceptable documents chart for Illinois residents:  
[https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ilsos.gov%2Fpublications%2Fpdf\\_publications%2Fdscd\\_x173.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cclare%40ilpork.com%7C60309dd83ffd49689cfb08db264d6601%7C0a03428d520347ae96e9d6e2e054670a%7C0%7C1%7C638145886113194055%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimc4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IkhhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=aBAGynrwmSC%2Bi8UoELWY8IMbmV7nO2CrtfSdGNsl1FA%3D&reserved=0](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ilsos.gov%2Fpublications%2Fpdf_publications%2Fdscd_x173.pdf&data=05%7C01%7Cclare%40ilpork.com%7C60309dd83ffd49689cfb08db264d6601%7C0a03428d520347ae96e9d6e2e054670a%7C0%7C1%7C638145886113194055%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimc4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IkhhaWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=aBAGynrwmSC%2Bi8UoELWY8IMbmV7nO2CrtfSdGNsl1FA%3D&reserved=0)
- Practice test: [FREE IL Permit Practice Test in Spanish 2023 | Road Signs \(driving-tests.org\)](http://FREE IL Permit Practice Test in Spanish 2023 | Road Signs (driving-tests.org))

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

The producers will need to connect the newcomer to healthcare. Some producers will have their own health and welfare benefits, but others will need to identify various options.

### [Affordable Care Act \(ACA\) Healthcare Marketplace](#)

- As part of the ACA health plan application, in most states, the newcomer will also be screened for other low and no cost health insurance programs, including Medicaid. Available plans will vary based on your area of residence.
- ACA plans do not have income restrictions.
- Some states have their own health exchanges or marketplaces where you can shop for healthcare. Residents of other states may access ACA plans through the federal marketplace.

### [Federally Qualified Health Care Centers \(FQHCs\)](#)

- Funded by the federal government to offer affordable health care in communities across the United States.
- Cannot turn anyone away for an inability to pay or for lack of insurance.
- FQHCs also often have health insurance enrollment specialists who can help newcomers determine what their insurance options may be.
- Interpretation available, as needed, usually through a language line.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as qualified interpreters and information written in other languages.

IDPH also provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively, such as qualified sign language interpreters.

IDPH has more than 20 staff members fluent in Spanish who can communicate directly with the Spanish-speaking public. Contact the IDPH Center for Minority Health Services at 217-782-4977 and ask to be routed to a bilingual staff person.

## **TRANSLATION SERVICES**

One of the biggest obstacles for a producer and newcomer is language. BestApp.com rates the five below apps as the best for translation:

- [Microsoft Translator](#) – Top pick
- [iTranslate](#) — Best for Different Dialects
- [Google Translate](#) — Most Popular
- [TripLingo](#) — Best for Live Translations
- [SayHi](#) — Best Performance

Typically, once the user downloads the app, internet service is not needed to use the app while in the barns/fields.

The below translators are available for verbal or written translation. The producer is responsible for contacting the translator and paying all fees. Prior to hiring a translator, ask your recruiting company if they have recommended translators and what fees apply.

Raquel Fernandez Vinas

Address: 76 17 88th Ave, Woodhaven Queens, NY 11421  
Email: [mvzvinas91@gmail.com](mailto:mvzvinas91@gmail.com) / [raquelf2@illinois.edu](mailto:raquelf2@illinois.edu)  
Phone: 217-954-3041  
Languages: English, Spanish  
Experience: Masters in Animal Science

Minoy Cristobal  
Email: [mcr91@illinois.edu](mailto:mcr91@illinois.edu)  
Phone: [217-693-9728](tel:217-693-9728)  
Languages: English, Spanish.  
Position: Research Assistant at University of Illinois  
Experience: Swine and poultry nutrition research, production, and evaluation of feedstuffs.

Jarrin Blunier  
Address: Forrest, Illinois (Livingston County)  
Email: [mr.mrs.farmhats@gmail.com](mailto:mr.mrs.farmhats@gmail.com)  
Phone: 815-867-3971  
Languages: English, Spanish  
Experience: Swine industry

Apex Translations, Inc.  
Phone: 1-800-634-4880  
<https://www.apex-translations.com/>

Ag Create Solutions  
Email: [info@agcreate.com](mailto:info@agcreate.com)  
Phone: 217-817-5016

Producers may also contact the Illinois Migrant Council, as they provide oral and written Spanish translation services. Website: [Illinois Migrant Council | Serving Illinois Farmworkers](http://IllinoisMigrantCouncil.org) and email contact [mrivera@illinoismigrant.org](mailto:mrivera@illinoismigrant.org)

In the Bloomington-Normal area, producers can reach out to the Western Avenue Community Center that coordinates interpretation and translation services for medial, legal, and education sectors of McLean County. Services are provided in Spanish, French, and American Sign Language.  
<https://westernavenuecc.org/>

Another translation option is LanguageLine. LanguageLine provides on-demand access to more than 16,000 professional interpreters in 240-plus languages via three formats: mobile, video, and phone. They provide 24/7 support. The producer must first establish an account prior to accessing this service.  
[www.language.com](http://www.language.com) or 1-800-752-6096.

The Pork Avenue Training Portal has over 180 learning experiences in English and Spanish across all aspects of pork production. Pork Avenue is a library of lessons and a training record keeping system. Producers can also create curriculums per job description on their farm. Contact [info@porkavenuetraining.com](mailto:info@porkavenuetraining.com) or call 217-817-5016 for more information about annual subscriptions.

The IPPA office provides a vocabulary guide of a Spanish-to-English/English-to-Spanish translations of common phrases and terms utilized on sow farms. Additionally, we now also offer a Wean To Finish

vocabulary guide that is English to Spanish. IPPA will provide each Illinois producer up to five copies of this guide at no cost. If you are not an Illinois producer, there is a nominal fee. Email [clare@ilpork.com](mailto:clare@ilpork.com) to request a copy.



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*Coming Soon – Vocabulary guide for wean-to-finish farms.*

Encourage the newcomer to enroll in English language training and digital literacy classes.

Additionally, most newcomers are more knowledgeable about the metric system. Producers should consider obtaining a conversion chart to post and/or find a website that has a printable chart.

## **BANKING**

Some banks require a social security card before they will allow a newcomer to open an account. Credit unions are often more flexible and can be a great choice. Continue to provide pocket money as appropriate until other income is received and/or until newcomer is able to cash checks.

Another alternative to a checking or savings account is a prepaid card. Inquire with your local bank as to if a debit card only account can be created for your newcomer. If the bank is unable to create such an account, contact Visa or MasterCard to create a prepaid debit card that is reloadable.

The newcomer may already have such a card system.

## **WIRING MONEY HOME**

The newcomer may need the option of wiring money home to their families. NerdWallet provides some general advice for international money transfers:

- Know how exchange rates work and how to find the best rate.
- Compare total transfer costs across multiple providers.
- Avoid paying with a credit card as that option has high fees.

NerdWallet is an American personal finance company that promotes financial products and literacy.

Remitly is an online and mobile money transfer service. They offer two ways of sending money: Express and Economy. The Express service lets the newcomer send both cash and transfers in minutes, however it is more expensive. The Economy service is more affordable and is ideal for bank-to-bank transfers. Remitly lets users set up transfers online, which makes it more affordable for cash transfers compared to traditional remitters such as a Western Union or MoneyGram. Remitly only

supports personal transfers to friends and family not large business transfers. Remitly has positive reviews on most review sites and is rated 4.1 out of 5 stars.

There are numerous online and mobile money transfer services. Visit [www.bestmoney.com/international/money-transfer](http://www.bestmoney.com/international/money-transfer) to identify best rated companies for the newcomers need.

Another option could be the Money Center at a Walmart. They provide a low fee transfer ranging from \$4 – \$12 from a Walmart in the U.S. to a Walmart in Mexico. Walmart will require that the newcomer have two forms of identification, one form must have their new Illinois address (such as mail, paystub, or Illinois driver's license) and the other form can be a passport or visa. If your newcomer has a Mexican matricula consular (a photo identification card issued by the Mexican government) that is the only identification that would be required.

Financial institutions also offer a wire transfer option but can be more costly. Check with your local bank or credit union to see what options are available.

## **TAXES**

Your newcomer does not need a SSN before they start working. Verify if your recruiting company has already assisted the newcomer in filing for SSN/card. If you or the recruiting company filed for a SSN, you will get a temporary receipt (that has the number) and you can use the number immediately prior to getting the actual card.

If the newcomer is issued a paycheck prior to having an SSN, make sure to get as much information on the W-2 as possible (worker's full name, address, date of birth, place of birth, father's full name, mother's full maiden name, gender and the date they applied for a SSN), the producer may need to include their own SSN. Once your newcomer has their SSN, file Form W-2c (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement), to show the worker's numbers.

Producers should consult with a tax advisor.

The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) offers free basic tax return preparation to individuals with limited English-speaking abilities. [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) | Benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov/vita)

## **OTHER SERVICES**

County or state human services departments, local city offices for immigrants, and statewide offices for newcomers can also be a great first stop in your exploration of available services. Illinois is a state that still offers non-citizens assistance with SNAP benefits.

[IDHS: Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees \(state.il.us\)](https://www.idhs.gov/welcoming-immigrants-and-refugees)

United Way is a great avenue to find local essential community services in your area: [211 - United Way of Illinois \(unitedwayillinois.org\)](https://www.unitedwayillinois.org). Additionally, reach out to local and community based organizations that offer services, as well as faith and cultural institutions that may be relevant. Keep encouraging your newcomer to connect with community benefits and services such as libraries and extracurricular activities to become engaged in the community.

Contact your congressional office for help. The congressional member can get in touch with federal agencies on your behalf as part of their constituent service. Although they can not solve all immigration issues and won't be able to reverse or change any decisions, they can help put a spotlight on a special case, which may highlight any processing delays or red-tape issues.

[Find Your Members in the U.S. Congress | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

## RECRUITING SERVICES

When beginning the recruiting process, in most basic cases, the producer only needs to provide a letter of support indicating the job opportunity, the NAFTA profession, dates of employment, compensation, and other basic information. The recruiting company will guide the producer through the necessary steps to match the correct worker/Visa with the type of position the producer needs to hire.

Estimated lead time from engagement of the recruitment to direct hire arriving in the United States is 16 to 26 weeks. Listed below are possible recruiting companies that producers may hire to obtain an international worker:

- Swineworks, International Labor Recruiting Service
  - IPPA members receive a \$500 discount with Swineworks, International Labor Recruiting Service, available one time per year for new and existing clients. Contact our IPPA Director of Membership, Mike Borgic at 217-529-3100 or [mike@ilpork.com](mailto:mike@ilpork.com)
- Farmer Law PC
- HR Group USA
- Innovative Specialty Services
- Ogletree Deakins
- Professional Swine Management, LLC
- Pipestone Farm Team
- The Bernard Firm

(IPPA does not endorse any specific recruiting company.)

Current international workers living in Illinois may be looking for a new job opportunity. Below are two Facebook sites that producers may join to post a job opening and/or see if there are available candidates.

- VisaTN/Ingenieros-Tecnicos/USA
- VISA-NAFTA PROFESSIONAL-TN/TD.MVZ.INGENIEROS ETC.

## TN VISA RENEWAL

TN visa holders can renew or extend their visa every three years. **Start the renewal process six months prior to the expiration date.** The TN visa has unlimited renewals but each time a renewal is submitted,

all requirements must be met. The TN renewal process in some ways is the same as the initial TN visa application process but there are a few differences that can be noted:

- Applicants can apply by mail using [Form I-129](#) known as Extension of Status. Applicants can also apply in-person and generally this is the most common way. Mexican citizens can apply at a [U.S. consulate](#). If you are located in the United States, your employer may file Form I-129 on the behalf of the applicant. Note that the U.S. employee is the “petitioner” and the TN visa worker is the “beneficiary.”
- Applicants must show they qualify for the TN visa under NAFTA. Applicants must include sufficient evidence that they will maintain their status for the additional period.

If the TN visa expires without a renewal or extension, the employee must stop working and has 60 days from the last date of employment, or up until the expiration date of the person’s I-94 record, whichever comes first, to leave the United States.

An immigration attorney or recruiting company is not required for the applicant to apply for the extension. However, to ensure that the application is completed properly their services can be beneficial and in most cases this service is at a flat rate.

As this resource tool evolves, producers are welcome and encouraged to share any additional information about hiring an international worker with IPPA. Please email [clare@ilpork.com](mailto:clare@ilpork.com)