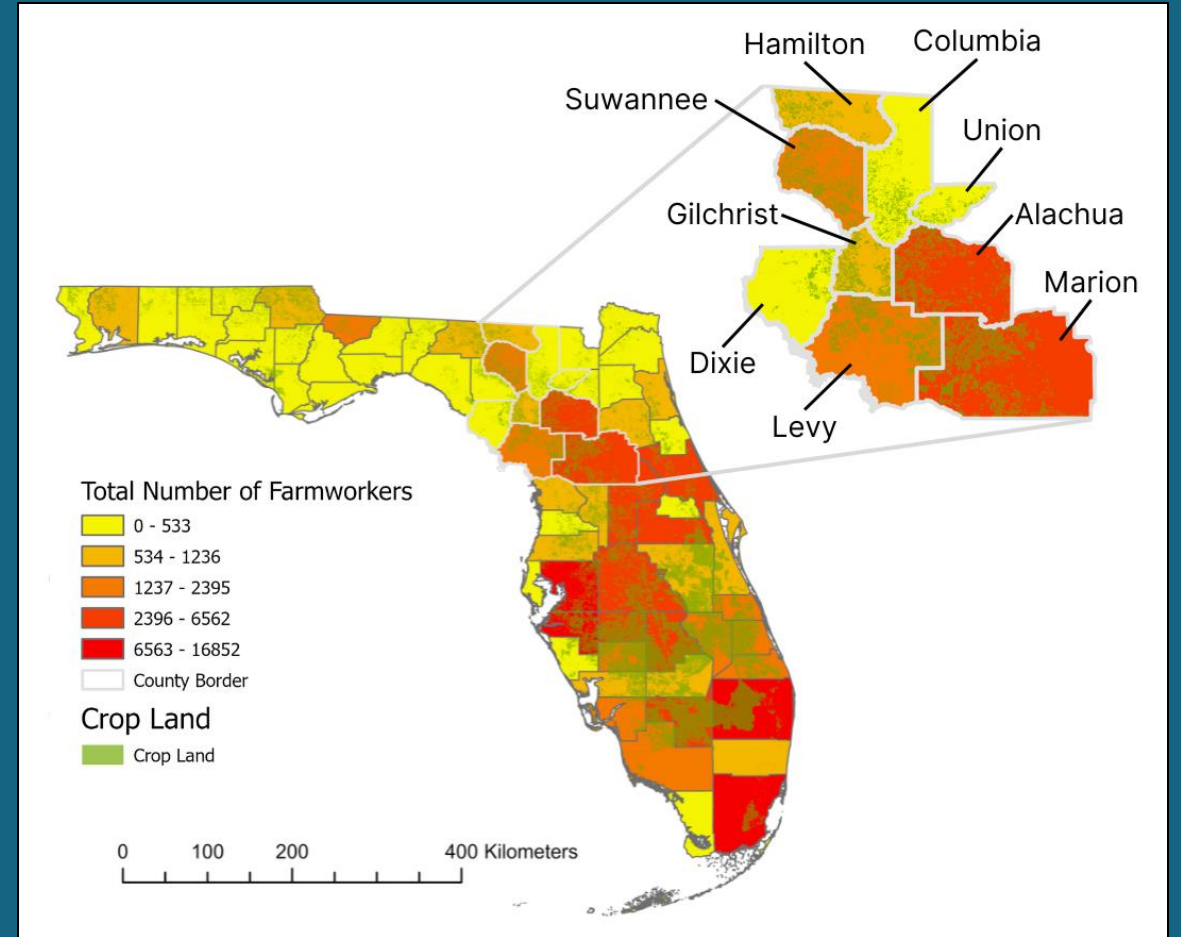


The Social Vulnerability of Farmworker Communities in North Central Florida: Challenges and Opportunities for Mapping Vulnerable Populations

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Project Overview



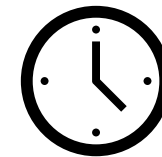
Purpose

Expand the CDC **Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)** to reflect the **unique disaster vulnerabilities** facing agricultural worker communities. Provide specific, place-based information to **improve local services** before, during, and after natural disasters.



Research Site

North Central Florida



Timeline

Nov. 2023 – June 2024



Research Questions

1. What factors shape the vulnerability of farmworker households to major storms?
2. Can this vulnerability be mapped using existing data resources?
3. How can agencies and organizations account for this vulnerability in disaster preparedness and response planning?

Methods

- **Two Community Advisory Boards**

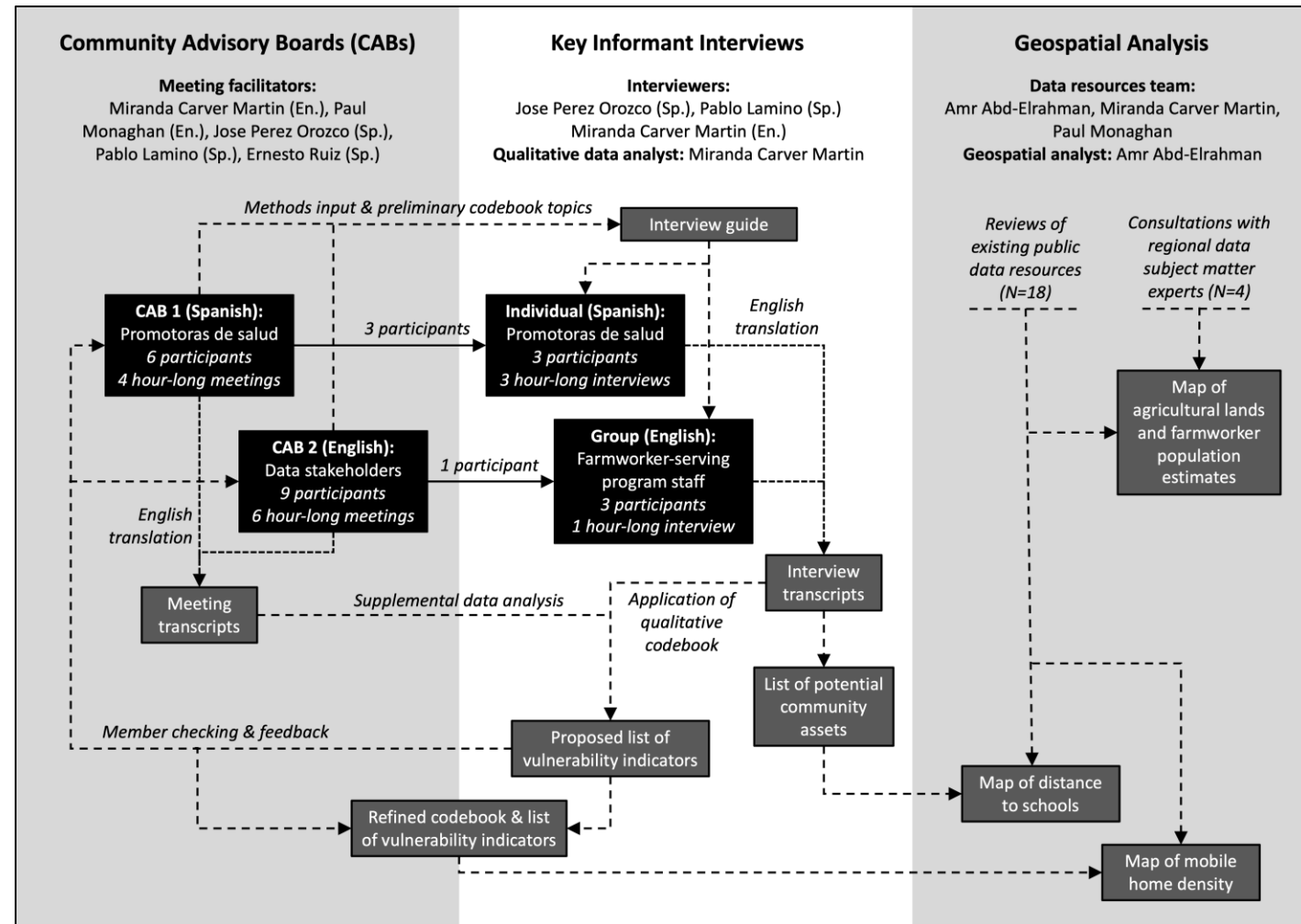
- Farmworker-serving staff
 - 6 participants
 - 4 meetings
 - Held in Spanish
- Data stakeholders
 - 9 participants
 - 6 meetings
 - Held in English

- **Key informant interviews**

- 6 farmworker-serving staff
- 4 interviews
- Held in Spanish & English

- **Qualitative analysis** of Community Advisory Board meetings & interviews

- Assessment of existing data resources and **geospatial analysis** of selected datasets



Preliminary Findings

Assessing social vulnerability requires understanding the local context.

Household-Level Theme	Indicators Derived from CDC SVI	Indicators Added Based on Qualitative Data	Community-Level Theme	Community-Level Indicators Added Based on Qualitative Data
Socioeconomic Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing cost burden Low educational attainment Low household income/poverty No health insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job precarity No housing insurance 	Labor-Intensive Agriculture and Forestry Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonality Low earning potential Lack of worker safety protection oversight Scheduling demands Restricted access to work sites H-2A guestworker visa program Workplace hazards Exclusion from ag-earmarked assistance
Household Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited English proficiency More children than adults Disability/special health needs Internet access barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short time in country Limited hurricane knowledge/ experience Limited Spanish proficiency Short time in county/local area Young children 	Communications Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-only emergency management English-only healthcare services English-only public media English-only public school communications English-only municipal services
Minority Status		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal status (e.g., in-process, undocumented, mixed-status) Hispanic/Latino Indigenous (e.g., Mixteco, Zapoteco) 	Sociopolitical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-immigrant policies Fear of public entities Anti-immigrant sentiment Race- and class-based discrimination
Housing Type & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile homes No personal vehicle Crowding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substandard housing conditions Rental status 	Economic & Material Support Service Gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rurality Lack of low-cost health services Lack of public transportation Disconnection between and among social service agencies and community-based orgs

Preliminary Findings

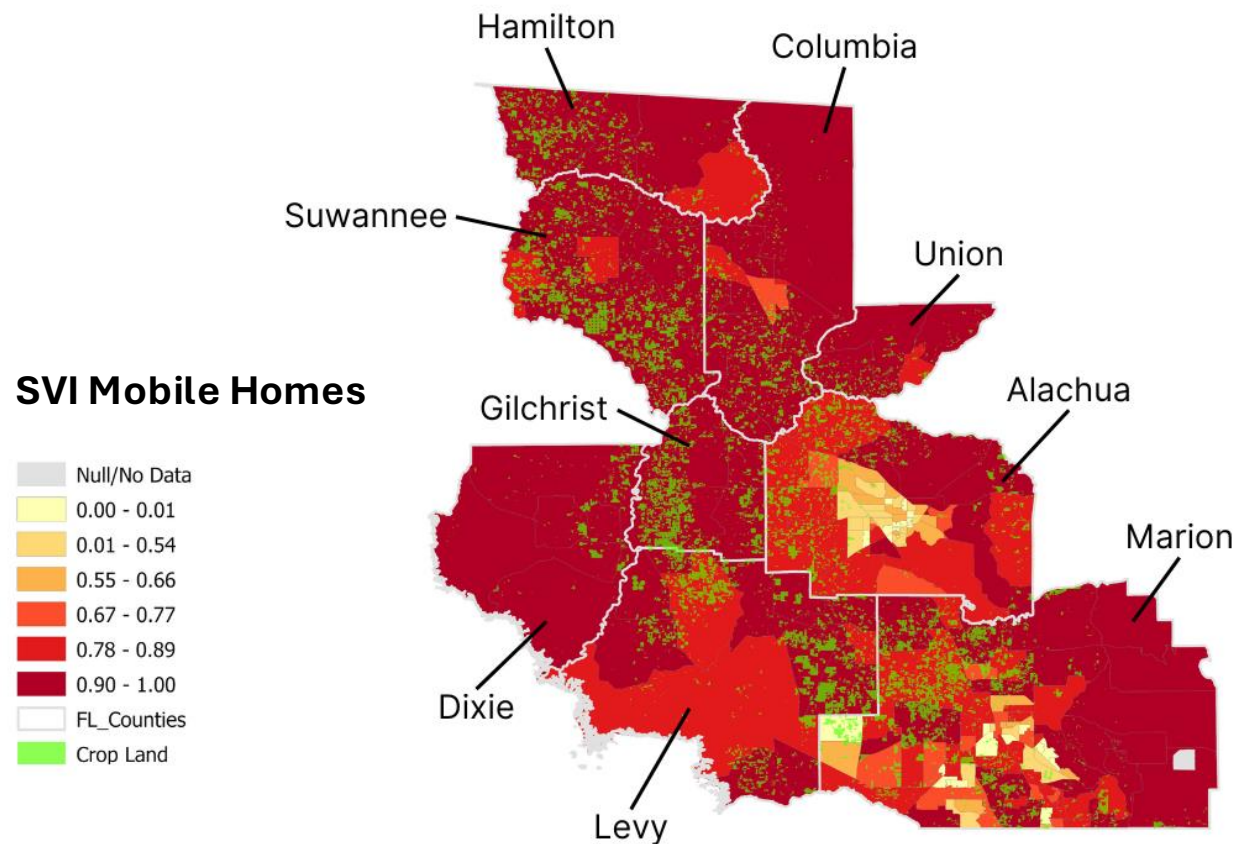
Farmworker-serving organizations, churches, and social networks navigate major gaps in services.

“The schools were already full, but there was a church [...] in Gilchrist County that was open. And the person who coordinates there is also Hispanic. And **that person had already passed the information to me that if there were any last-minute emergency families, they were going to receive them before six o'clock that day. **So I spread the word [...]** And this family went to [the church] to take refuge.”**

– Promotora de salud

Preliminary Findings

Geospatial indicators can be contextualized with qualitative descriptions of lived experiences.

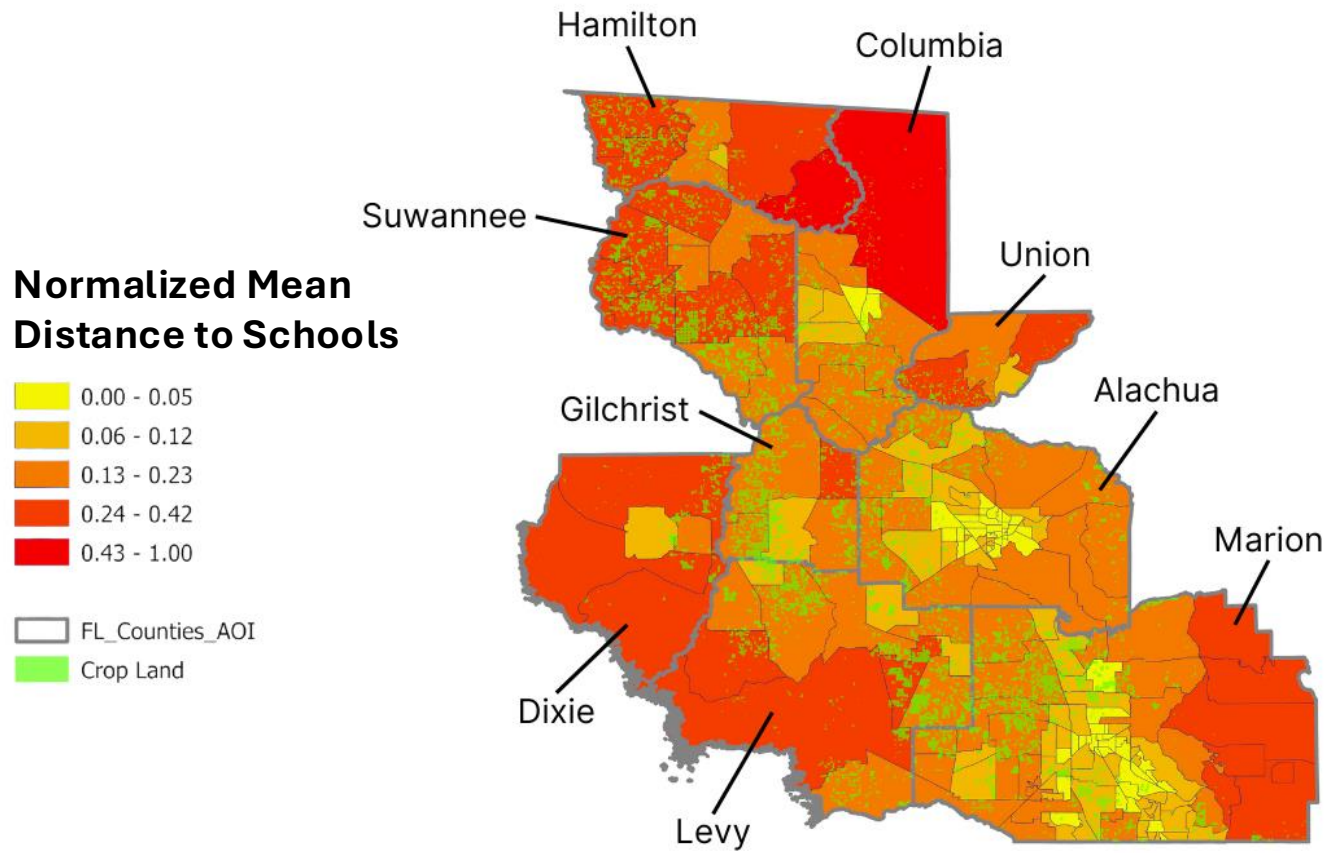


“Many **fear that they won't be accepted** because they don't have documents. Or because they don't have any identification. I think that's one of the things that **limits people from going to a shelter** [...] I have like two families that have **children with disabilities**. [...] But because **they are afraid**, they're just waiting for whatever happens. [...] They stayed there in their house. **And they live in mobile homes.**”

– *Promotora de salud*

Preliminary Findings

Integrated geospatial and qualitative data can be used to develop targeted, place-based interventions.



“I think the **school plays a big part in what's happening**, because schools are closed, the kids speak **English**, and they may be ESOL students, but the **school is sending out the announcements**, they're calling the homes, ‘There's no school. There's a storm.’ Do they understand that they need to go to a shelter or any of that? In Hamilton County, I would very much doubt that.”

– Farmworker-serving program staff member

Public Health Implication

1

Long-term efforts to eliminate the social vulnerabilities facing farmworker communities must identify, target, and track changes in **community-level contextual factors.**

- **Public data resources** on agriculture and forestry industries as well as social vulnerabilities require **multiple key improvements:**
 - **More frequent data collection** cycles that prioritize the **safe inclusion of migrant and seasonal workers** with any legal status.
 - Projected **agriculture and forestry labor needs** by month at the county and/or census tract level.
 - Inclusion of **community context indicator variables** in social vulnerability indices and databases to track improvements over time.
- Interventions should **ally with movements addressing the sociopolitical and economic root causes of social vulnerability**, including exploitative labor practices, language access inequities, structural racism and xenophobia, and inequitable distribution of material and social support.

Public Health Implication

2

Short-term efforts to improve disaster-related outcomes among farmworker communities should use integrated qualitative and geospatial data to tailor place-based intervention approaches.

- Maps of both individual indicators of social vulnerability and potential adaptive capacity can help **prioritize specific approaches** for a given area.

For example...

- The Dixie-Levy County border area may benefit from **school-focused interventions** to communicate more effectively with farmworker communities and to safely and comfortably access shelters.
- Northern Suwannee County and western Hamilton County may need a more intensive approach leveraging **other supportive community assets** (e.g., churches with farmworker ministries).

Public Health Implication

3

Disaster researchers, public health agencies, school administration, and emergency managers should **collaborate with farmworker-serving organizations and practitioners.**

- Social vulnerability mapping efforts and community needs assessments **require qualitative input** from groups with deep place-based knowledge of the lived experiences of farmworker communities.
- Farmworker health and labor organizations, organizations serving immigrant community members, and farmworker-serving churches can **leverage strong social networks** as well as **linguistic and cultural competencies**.
- Farmworker-serving staff should have an integral role in local and regional **disaster preparedness and response planning**.
- These organizations go above and beyond and **should receive material and technical assistance** in recognition of these efforts.

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