

2023 Stand-Down Success Story: CASA



CASA is a national membership-based organization of immigrants that advocates for change through human services, community organizing, and advocacy. Many of its members work in construction. CASA's Community Development Department has organized Stand-Downs events every year since the Stand-Down began in 2014.

CASA prepared for its 2023 Stand-Down by honoring workers who died of falls in the DC-area in its April Worker Memorial Day commemoration. Then, in the first week of May, CASA held its tenth Stand-Down through six different events (described below) that reached approximately 80 workers in English, Spanish, and French:

- CASA held three Stand-Downs events for day laborers in each of its three Maryland Welcome Centers in Wheaton, Rockville, and Silver Spring. CASA's Welcome Centers provide information, referrals, employment placement services, vocational training, and more to new immigrants. Each day, construction workers arrive at CASA's Welcome Centers at 7am to sign their name on a roster and wait for work. When workers arrived for work during the first week of May, they were invited to participate in the Stand-Down.
- CASA held a Stand-Down in an English as a Second Language (ESOL) class in its Wheaton, Maryland Welcome Center. CASA hosts ESOL classes for community members.
- CASA held two Stand-Downs in construction vocational training classes in its Rockville, Maryland Welcome Center. CASA runs vocational training classes in partnership with a local community college. One class was about Building and Maintenance Engineering (BME) and the other class was on how to read blueprints.

“It’s important to emphasize that it’s not just your family here that depends on your work, but also your family overseas.

If something happens to you, that chain will be broken.”

-Fernando Garavito,
Senior Manager of
Employment Services

In each event, CASA provided training for workers on how to prevent falls, how to protect themselves and fellow workers from falls and work-related injuries, and workers' rights to fall protection. It used OSHA's curriculum to teach how to use a harness, how to do daily harness inspections, how to fit a harness, when to dispose of a harness, and how to use other types of personal protective equipment like hardhats and safety glasses. Instructors used harnesses for hands-on demonstrations. CASA also provided training on how to check the safety of access equipment like scaffolds, and how to ensure that fall prevention measures like barricades are properly installed and working. Written materials were distributed in English, Spanish, and French on fall safety, retaliation protections, and on how to contact OSHA. A raffle was held for safety glasses, and all participants received disposable ear plugs.

For the Stand-Down and all its activities, CASA focuses on the needs of immigrant workers. It tailors its training with awareness that many participants come from countries where there is less regulation of construction, and that participants may be unaware of fall protection options and the rights workers have related to fall safety and retaliation. CASA emphasizes the importance of using equipment for hands-on demonstrations so participants can learn how equipment should feel. Keeping training accessible, interactive, and straightforward is a priority for CASA.

