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Investing in Change for Workers in Northern Central America

CIERTO and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation Partner to Expand Responsible Labor Recruitment to Guatemala

CIERTO today announced a renewed partnership with the **Howard G. Buffett Foundation** (the Foundation) to address irregular migration by providing more legal pathways for foreign workers from Northern Central American countries to access H2A visas.

Today's announcement builds on the initial seed funding the Foundation provided *CIERTO* when it was first established in 2016 to help U.S. growers access foreign-born workers using a clean, transparent, and ethical recruitment model that ensures that workers know their legal rights for fair pay and working conditions.

CIERTO initially focused on workers from Mexico who qualify for H-2A visas. Their goal was to demonstrate the model and market among employers and workers for recruitment practices that create a more stable, professional, and productive workforce. The new grant will allow *CIERTO* to expand its model to include workers from Guatemala.

"Our food system, in all 50 states, is dependent on temporary workers, most of whom migrate from impoverished countries south of our border to work and improve their own livelihoods back home," said Howard G. Buffett, Chairman and CEO of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation.

"The more we can create legal pathways for these temporary workers to access the demand created by employers who cannot find the labor they need in the United States, the better we will be able to address some of the pull factors driving unlawful migration and the humanitarian issues that accompany it."

Data shows that workers who come to work in the U.S. free of fear and undue debt burdens improve their productivity by over 18%. At the same time, growers who comply with H-2A requirements see benefit, as workers are eager to return to work at farms where their rights are safeguarded and their skills are valued.

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In addition, by working with growers in the U.S. to create rights-respecting opportunities for several thousand workers over the last 6 years, *CIERTO* has unlocked an estimated \$98 Million in pre-tax income gains over the Mexican minimum wage, improving the livelihoods of participating workers.

Demonstrating that agricultural work is skilled labor has been an important part of *CIERTO*'s mission from the beginning, according to Joe Martinez, the company's co-founder and CEO.

“Once we've established clean, ethical recruiting as a baseline, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that agricultural workers are professionals and that this is a skilled labor force.

When workers are recognized for the knowledge they bring to the table regarding farming best practices and expertise in specific crops, that's when you'll start to see big improvements in the lives of H-2A farm workers.

So, we're very excited to again work with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to continue to grow the H-2A program and to establish our model in Guatemala. The creation of an ethical and fair H-2A recruitment process will benefit Guatemalan workers, families, and communities, as well as protect US farmers and safeguard our food supply chain.”

The grant provided by the Foundation is designed to support recruitment of up to 20,000 H-2A workers from Guatemala, individuals who might otherwise seek employment in the United States through exploitative, irregular, and unlawful channels.

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The [Howard G. Buffett Foundation's](#) mission is to catalyze transformational change to improve the standard of living and quality of life for the world's most impoverished and marginalized populations.

CIERTO is one of North America's leading recruiters, dedicated to assisting employers with the federal H-2A visa program. We recruit, train, and place experienced workers on farms in the United States and Canada. Our mission is to actively develop and maintain a professional, career-oriented, agricultural workforce, committed to returning to farms year after year.

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