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Guam could look to Mexico for H-2B workforce



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By Julius Santos [CONNECT](#)

Guam could be looking to Mexico to solve our H-2B worker woes. In the wake of the H-2B crisis, the Guam Department of Labor is working with a labor solutions company out of Dallas, Texas to diversify our island's outsourcing for temporary construction workers.

Veronica Birkenstock, the president and CEO of Practical Employee Solutions, is no stranger to Guam. She was here back in 2009 to see how her company could help with the first attempt at the military buildup.

"I bring 30 years of experience to the table," she said. "I have relationships in these countries and I know how to navigate them. Right now, about a month or so ago we reached out and got a list of the job descriptions and we've sourced about 7,500 workers who are available now."

"All these people have the experience and they worked stateside in construction industries," Birkenstock said. "They have the skill sets and the interest to come. The wages are attractive to them and they're eagerly awaiting--my phone's been blowing up in the last two days since I've been here."

When asked if the high cost of airfare would lead to greater construction costs, DOL Director David Dell'Isola said the process to source workers from Mexico would take less time at a substantially lower price than the current process to source H-2s from the Philippines.

The director pointed out that although our Maga'haga was able to get approval for additional workers from the Philippines, her goal is to diversify our island's sources of labor for times of need.

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