

2020 IMPACT REPORT



15 YEARS
ADVANCING JUSTICE WITH MIGRANT WORKERS



CENTRO DE LOS
DERECHOS DEL
MIGRANTE, INC.



EVERY YEAR,

hundreds of thousands of migrant workers are recruited internationally to perform seasonal, high-risk, low-wage labor in the United States. Many of these men and women travel from Mexico to rural and remote U.S. farms and factories to labor in some of the lowest-paid sectors of the economy. Their numbers are only growing. This year, a record number of farmworkers were recruited to work on H-2A visas, continuing the upward trend and following last year's record-breaking admissions.

Regardless of their immigration status, migrant workers are subject to a system rife with abuse that creates conditions for workers to suffer health and safety violations, sexual harassment, wage theft, and retaliation. In some cases, the economic coercion by employers leads to labor trafficking.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the precarious working conditions facing migrant workers across industries.

15 YEARS
OF IMPACT

27,530

Migrant Workers
Trained in Person

\$36.3+
million

Earnings and Damages
Recovered and Distributed

1+ million
Visits to Contratados.org

For 15 years, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM) has worked alongside migrant workers to remove the border as a barrier to justice. Through worker organizing, groundbreaking advocacy, innovative legal strategies, and technology, CDM has advanced justice for millions of migrant workers across borders. With offices in Juchitán, Oaxaca; Mexico City; and Baltimore, Maryland; CDM's unique transnational approach provides support and access to crucial legal services to migrant workers along their journey.

While the government continues to criminalize immigrant communities by restricting access to programs such as DACA and Temporary Protected Status, the use of migrant worker labor continues to expand. This trend has only reinforced the need for CDM's leadership to ensure that the labor and immigrants' rights movements reflect the experiences and voices of all migrant workers.



CENTRO DE LOS
DERECHOS DEL
MIGRANTE, INC.



Dear Friends,

In 2005, I founded CDM with a vision: a world where migrant workers' rights are respected and policies reflect their voices and experiences. From the very beginning, our (then) small, but powerful, team working from an office in Zacatecas, Mexico, would start to wield the power necessary to build the future we envisioned.

Now, 15 years later, I'm in awe of the boundaries we have pushed and the barriers we have removed alongside migrant workers. I'm thinking of some of our very first clients—the migrant leaders who founded CDM's Migrant Defense Committee (Comité) and inspired hundreds of workers to take action. I'm thinking of our incredible and talented CDM alumni—staff and volunteers with unwavering commitment who continue to uphold the organization's values as some of the most prominent leaders in the labor and immigrants' rights movements.

In the following pages, you'll read how CDM has led countless victories in workplaces, courtrooms, and the halls of power. We could not have done it without powerful worker leaders, our allies across movements, and the supporters who have fueled our 15-year fight for justice.

2020 has stretched so many institutions to the breaking point. As the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, it was clear that the imbalance of power would only increase worker vulnerability to abuse.

COVID-19 is exposing migrant workers to tremendous risk, making our work more important than ever. CDM's creative and innovative approach to migrant workers' rights meant that we quickly adapted our strategies to better serve migrant workers throughout the pandemic: organizing workers across borders, giving access to real-time and reliable rights information via [Contratados.org](https://contratados.org), providing crucial legal services, and advocating to ensure that economic relief packages include migrant worker protections. The pandemic is a reminder of how much there is left to accomplish.

Migrant workers' voices and experiences must be at the center of any system, policy, or process that affects them.

We will all remember 2020 as a pivotal point in history. I believe this is an opportunity to re-think labor migration—the CDM team will fight with unflappable dedication, creativity, and audacity until migrant workers' rights and dignity are respected.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RM' or similar initials, followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Rachel Micah-Jones
Executive Director
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.



27,530
Migrant Workers
Trained in Person

Worker-Centered: The Power of Organizing and Outreach

For CDM, being worker-centered means that our efforts, strategies, and tactics aren't merely informed by migrant workers, but are defined by them. The relationships we build with workers are the force driving our fight for migrant justice.

Those relationships are the fruits of 15 years of committed organizing, reaching 27,530 workers through in-person outreach. Our team reaches workers with information about their rights throughout their journey—in their home communities, when they're processing their visas in Monterrey, to their workplaces in the U.S. CDM is connected with an ever-expanding network of workers across geography and industry who ensure our work is meeting their needs in real-time.

Our workshops cover not only wage laws, health and safety regulations, and risk prevention, but also the current political context and policy developments pertaining to labor migration programs. Attendees spread information about their rights and CDM's legal intake services—a critical

resource for workers seeking justice after returning home or in the midst of abusive workplace conditions.

At the core of this effort is our Comité de Defensa del Migrante ("Comité" or Migrant Defense Committee)—a group of over 100 community leaders who organize and empower migrant workers to defend themselves and educate their co-workers. Comprising current and former migrants (some of whom were among the first clients of CDM), the Comité includes workers across visa categories and undocumented workers as well as their family members.

CDM's outreach efforts and strategies are largely defined by the Comité's leadership and direction. Thanks to CDM and our Comité's presence across the migration

stream, we're able to provide leadership development—skills of organizing, media relations, and political action. Throughout our 15 years, we've watched as workers who have attended Know-Your-Rights workshops in rural villages blaze a trail of advocacy in the pages of the Wall Street Journal, testimony in Congress, and victories in the courtroom.

Equipped with this knowledge, migrant workers embark with the confidence they need to exercise their rights. Through investment in education and leadership development, CDM and our Comité support tens of thousands of workers in Mexico and the United States in taking proactive approaches to end workplace abuses.



Marisol: Fighting for Justice for Farmworker Women

Only 7% of people hired on an H-2 visa are women and almost all are assigned positions with lower salaries. This rampant discrimination motivated Marisol, an H-2A agricultural worker in Florida, to join the Comité and advocate for gender equality:

"When there comes a moment that someone needs assistance, I would like to help them by offering the information that I gain in the organization," says Marisol. "We must get our act together, open our eyes, and keep pushing for more information so that they don't deceive us."



In Memoriam: Don Adelaido Garcia

In 2003, in a Florida orange grove, Don Adelaido Garcia met CDM's Founder and Executive Director Rachel Micah-Jones when she was a recent law school graduate; he was nursing his injuries from a workplace accident. His employer tried to cover

up his injury, but together Don Adelaido and Rachel fought for justice and won. In the years that followed, Don Adelaido took the lead in building a community of informed migrant workers dedicated to reform. As a founding member of our Comité, he organized Know-Your-Rights workshops in his hometown of Tierra Blanca and neighboring communities and was instrumental in the growth of our Comité into a powerful force for change anchored by more than 100 worker leaders and their families.

On December 19, 2019, Don Adelaido Garcia passed away at the age of 70. His memory and legacy strengthen the Comité's resolve and remind us this crucial work reflects an unflappable commitment to fulfill the vision of those who came before us.

My coworkers and I were mistreated by the company and the recruiter who always cheated us and never kept his promises.

—Gerardo Santiago Hernández



Pushing Legal Boundaries to Advance Migrant Justice

CDM has supported thousands of migrant workers in accessing justice.

After a comprehensive intake process, our multilingual legal team evaluates workers' potential work-related claims under U.S. law, provides legal advice, and connects workers with advocates at partner non-profit organizations, law firms, and government agencies.

CDM represents migrant workers in strategic, high-impact litigation and has won legal victories to protect low-wage workers' rights. We also provide on-the-ground legal and investigative services to U.S.-based legal organizations, law firms, and government agencies to ensure migrants' access to justice. The successes in these court cases set valuable legal precedents key to protecting workers' rights in future litigation, legislation, and rulemaking.

Crucial Legal Victories

Rivera v. Brickman Group, Ltd (2008)

Together with attorney Edward Tuddenham and Friends of Farmworkers, CDM represented hundreds of former H-2B employees of one of the largest landscapers in the United States in federal wage litigation. In a groundbreaking order, the court held that H-2B employers must reimburse workers for recruitment, visa, and transportation fees that reduce wages below the federal minimum wage.

Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA) v. Perez (2014)

In collaboration with a coalition of U.S. workers and their advocates, CDM represented the only guestworker plaintiff to challenge the U.S. Department of Labor's 2009 H-2B regulations. In 2014, the plaintiffs won a landmark ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The decision prohibited the use of biased employer surveys to determine the prevailing wage and resulted in an estimated \$382 million in additional wages paid to H-2B workers each year.

Doe v. Butler Amusements, Inc (2013)

CDM's "Fair Workers, Fair Wages" campaign undertook efforts at reform in the U.S. traveling carnival industry, where thousands of H-2B migrants labor in unsafe and unjust conditions. In *Doe v. Butler Amusements*, CDM and co-counsel Legal Aid Society—Employment Law Center (now known as Legal Aid at Work) represented H-2B carnival workers whose employer charged them illegal recruitment fees and stole their wages in violation of federal and California law. The court granted an order allowing the workers to pursue their claims anonymously to protect them from retaliation. The "Fair Workers, Fair Wages" campaign involved cases in several other jurisdictions and prompted an industry-wide investigation of abuses in the fair industry as well as payment of thousands of dollars in back wages to workers.

Reyes-Trujillo et al. v. Four Star Greenhouse Inc. et al. (2020)

CDM, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC), and Farmworker Legal Services of Michigan (FLS) represented six H-2A agricultural workers who allege their employer forced them to work without pay and retaliated against them for complaining by coordinating with immigration officials to detain the workers in a parking lot. This ongoing litigation will be crucial in holding employers accountable, spotlighting how the structure of the H-2A program, by tying work visas to one employer, coerces workers into working under illegal conditions under threat of deportation.

Gerardo Stands Up to Labor Traffickers

Gerardo Santiago Hernández is from Guerrero, a community in the state of Hidalgo where job opportunities are scarce. Gerardo chose to look for a job on an H-2A visa with the hope of supporting his wife and 4 children. While working in the US, he found that conditions were far from what he was promised.

Gerardo's contracts only lasted 3 or 4 months. However, his employer made him and his coworkers stay longer, promising them he would apply for visa extensions. Gerardo didn't know if he could trust his boss, and he felt uncomfortable about working with an expired visa because he didn't want to make a mistake or break a law. Nevertheless, he felt he had no other option.

"For me, working in the United States was sad and difficult. My coworkers and I were mistreated by the company and the recruiter who always cheated us and never kept his promises," says Gerardo.

"We had been doing hard work picking sweet potatoes and oranges, so we were excited by the promise that when we went to Michigan, they were going to pay us more per hour. But when the recruiter brought us to Michigan to work with Four Star Greenhouse, they ultimately stopped paying us altogether," says Gerardo of his experience. "They kept me and eight other coworkers locked up in an apartment for a month. I felt like I had been kidnapped. Neither the boss nor the recruiter answered our calls. We were really worried. They didn't take us to go grocery shopping or to add money to our phones so that we could stay in touch with our families and loved ones in Mexico."

Now, Gerardo is back in Mexico—and he is hopeful. With the support of the legal teams at CDM, MIRC, and FLS, Gerardo and his colleagues are fighting for justice.



Litigation Support

Among other transnational support services, CDM travels to communities across Mexico to inform workers of their right to opt-in to collective action cases or to assist with settlement disbursement. CDM facilitates transnational discovery by obtaining documents and conducting depositions in Mexico. We also defend access to justice for injured migrants by supporting them in obtaining immigration waivers to attend legal hearings and medical evaluations in the United States.

CDM's legal team supports U.S.-based advocates with transnational settlement distribution through an innovative partnership with Bansefi, a government savings bank with branches throughout Mexico. This settlement service, which CDM negotiated exclusively to serve migrant communities, ensures that migrants in rural areas without bank accounts can easily and safely receive their case proceeds.

From intake to disbursement, CDM and allies are continually building upon efforts to not only secure restitution for victims but set standards for holding bad actors to account. We're sending a strong message that infringement of migrant worker rights will have serious legal consequences and turning the tables on employers and recruiters who rely on intimidation to deprive workers of justice.

Featured Cases:

State of Washington v. Motel 6 Operating L.P. (2018)

CDM was engaged by the Washington Attorney General's Office to identify and locate victims of Motel 6s in Washington State that shared guest registry information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) without a warrant. In exhaustive investigatory work, including interviews with hundreds of guests across borders, CDM ensured that the \$12 million in restitution reached motel guests most profoundly impacted by these illegal practices. As part of the settlement, Motel 6 agreed to no longer hand over guest information without a warrant or other lawful basis and train their employees accordingly.

Teoba v. TruGreen Landcare, L.L.C. (2010)

CDM provided litigation support to attorneys in this class action on behalf of H-2B employees of U.S. landscaping giant TruGreen Landcare, L.L.C. for violations of state and federal minimum wage laws stemming from the company's failure to reimburse visa and travel expenses. After the case settled for more than \$1.2 million in April 2014, CDM led extensive outreach efforts in Mexico and the United States to distribute settlement notices and claim forms to hundreds of class members. CDM assisted hundreds of former TruGreen workers submit claims valued at more than \$700,000 and facilitated the disbursement of settlement payments totaling nearly \$400,000 to approximately 300 workers in Mexico.

Herrera v. Ag-Mart (2006)

CDM located former workers in Mexico to testify about pesticide use in the fields owned by tomato grower Ag-Mart Produce. Workers Francisca Herrera and Abraham Candelario brought a suit against the company after their son Carlitos was born without limbs. The couple and other workers testified that they were directly sprayed with pesticides as they worked in Ag-Mart's fields, causing Carlitos' injuries. The couple successfully settled the suit, ensuring proper medical care for Carlitos, the payment of lost wages, and compensation for pain and suffering. The case exposed growers' callous exposure of their workers to dangerous pesticides and brought new safety measures to the industry.

Transparency Through Online Organizing—Contratados.org

Fraud and abuse thrive when unscrupulous employers and recruiters are able to conceal their actions. The free flow of information at all points in the labor migration chain ensures that employers and recruiters can be held accountable for abuse, promotes solidarity among workers, and advances justice.

Recognizing the need for a secure platform, as well as the possibilities of a purpose-built tool, the Comité ideated Contratados.org, a "Yelp++ for migrant workers." With the generous support of The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, CDM brought it to life.

This online community gives workers the opportunity to share their experiences and reviews in an easily searchable interface that promotes employer and recruiter accountability and helps workers steer clear of abusive conditions. It also serves as a clearinghouse of expert-vetted news and guidance with information relevant to migrant workers as well as emergency bulletins.

Named one of eight "Solver" teams in the MIT Solve "Work of the Future" Challenge, Contratados has received more than one million visits since it was founded. Earning close to 1,000 visits per day, Contratados has already proved its value to migrant workers and forged a new path in leveraging technology to reform guestworker programs.

We're getting ready to launch a new phase of Contratados.org: a new job board will connect workers with verified recruiters and employers, and a digital intake feature will allow workers to connect with our support staff without having to speak on the telephone.

Earning close to 1,000 visits per day, Contratados has already proved its value to migrant workers.

Including a job board for migrant workers to move between employers will promote transparency and ethical working conditions for workers. If workers have labor mobility—the opportunity to freely leave their work—employers would be forced to improve conditions to retain and hire new workers.

Jobseeker Combats Recruitment Fraud

“In Irapuato, Guanajuato, job opportunities are scarce. That’s why I decided to look for a job in the United States.

In the state capital Leon, a recruiter promised me a job picking oranges and watermelons in Florida. All I had to do was pay \$100 to get on his list. It was a lot of money, but I wanted to have a better life. He told me he’d reach out to me in 22 days with the contract to sign. So I waited.

After a month and a half, I became suspicious. Then I found Contratados. I looked up the recruiter and found workers sharing their stories about how he had defrauded them, stealing thousands of pesos.

I went back to the recruiter’s office in Leon and demanded my money back. His colleagues tried to calm me down, telling me that I had to wait longer. They even gave me a “contract” in English, but there was no employer or address listed. I had read some information on red flags to identify recruitment fraud on a Contratados blog post, so I knew I wasn’t leaving until I got my money back.

I went back to Irapuato and shared my experience on Contratados. I don’t want anyone else to believe this recruiter’s lies. Contratados is a great tool to prevent abuse and ensure a recruiter’s offer is real. The more reviews one sees about the recruiter in the forum, the more one wonders: is this offer real? The information about how to spot fake offers is very helpful to verify offers ourselves. Knowing is power.” —Anonymous

Enshrining Workers’ Rights Through Policy Advocacy

Reforming guestworker programs through policy advocacy requires creativity: using a range of strategies including federal and state legislation, administrative processes, as well as international trade agreements.

In 2017, CDM launched a trilateral, coordinated campaign with allied organizations from Mexico, the United States, and Canada to strengthen protections for migrant workers in the new NAFTA agreement. We mobilized allies and migrant workers, persuaded trade officials, and leveraged the press and social media. In the summer of 2017, Comité members Adareli Ponce and Leonardo Cortez and the CDM team testified before the U.S. Trade Representative to strengthen migrant protections.

Our efforts paid off. While the toothless NAFTA labor side accord left workers waiting years for responses to their complaints and without remedy, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) includes an enforceable Labor Chapter that explicitly mentions migrant worker protections. This is a groundbreaking decision that will affect millions of migrant workers who work in the U.S.

CDM has dedicated substantial resources to influencing the regulatory rulemaking process in order to increase worker protections by mobilizing allies and workers and leveraging Contratados.org. In 2015, our efforts were instrumental in securing the adoption of a new comprehensive H-2B rule from the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Homeland Security (DHS). Enshrined in this rule are new mandates prohibiting recruitment fees and retaliation, ensuring reimbursement of visa and transportation fees, a requirement that workers be given a copy of their contract, and a “Three-Fourths Guarantee”—requiring employers to pay workers at least three-fourths of their contracted hours.

At the international level, CDM has ensured that the issues and abuses related to migrant worker recruitment gained worldwide attention. CDM staff and Executive Director Rachel Micah-Jones have been delegates in several high-level international meetings, including talks leading up to the UN’s Global Compact on Migration. CDM has filed complaints and contributed evidence and testimony in different regional and global human rights fora and participated in UN high-level

meetings on topics related to the status of women and trafficking.

“CDM’s peerless transnational leadership and worker-centered policy advocacy have had a profound impact on advancing labor rights and recruitment reform in both North America and at the global level. By elevating workers’ voices and demands in government spaces, trade negotiations, and international fora like the UN and ILO, CDM has shaped important international standards and policy instruments to empower migrant workers and root out exploitation in the labor recruitment industry.”

—Charlie Fanning

Migration that Works

Achieving justice requires building a diverse coalition of organizations each bringing their specific skills, resources, and inroads to drive reform.

In 2011, CDM, alongside labor, migration, and anti-trafficking organizations and academics, founded the International Labor Recruitment Working Group (ILRWG), the first coordinated effort to strategically address worker rights abuses across industries and visa categories. In 2019, the ILRWG was renamed Migration that Works (MTW), reflecting our commitment to an alternative value-based model for labor migration that prioritizes the human rights of workers and their families, elevating labor standards for all workers.

As chair of MTW, CDM is deeply committed to the groundbreaking work of the coalition. MTW members have long-standing relationships with workers across visa categories and sectors: from farmworkers and teachers to domestic and seafood workers. For years, MTW has published powerful advocacy reports and led worker-voice initiatives. This umbrella organization unites our diverse memberships and expertise to tackle the flaws in migration programs with a systematic and inclusive approach.



Women are the Future of Guestwork

CDM's "Proyecto de Mujeres Migrantes" (Migrant Women's Project or "ProMuMi") is our intersectional project ensuring that gender justice is upheld across the organization's program areas and initiatives. ProMuMi was born in CDM's early days, when our team traveled to Hidalgo, Mexico, and encountered a group of guestworker women. They suggested that our team hold women-only community meetings where they could speak freely about the unique challenges faced by guestworker women.

Labor migration is not a gender-neutral phenomenon. Instead, women's stories illustrate how gender bias and discrimination are deeply entrenched in the temporary labor migration programs which facilitate women's exclusion from equal employment opportunities and foster gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

In our 2017 report *Engendering Exploitation*, we found 70% of the workers surveyed observed some form of sex-based discrimination in their recruitment or employment. Some women reported being denied the ability to apply for jobs under certain visa programs.

CDM delivers workshops and develops materials that convey critical information about U.S. workplace rights and information about pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, and other issues meant specifically for migrant women.

Workers and allies recognize labor migration is in need of new models that shift control from employers to workers, elevate labor standards, respect family unity, ensure equity and access to justice, and afford migrant workers an accessible pathway to citizenship. Advancing gender justice in labor migration programs requires centering migrant worker women's voices.

In 2019, we launched the "*Future of (Guest) Work: Women Building Gender Equity*," a new campaign strengthening connections between migrant worker women and allies

across movements, visa categories, and industries. Together with guestworker women and allies, the campaign is leveraging our shared efforts to shape the future of guestworker programs through advocacy, coalition-building, and organizing.

At the core of the campaign is our annual convening—held in Washington, D.C., in 2019 and virtually in 2020—where migrant worker women share their experiences and vision for change and strategize efforts at reform.

In the months leading up to the three-day 2020 convening, workers and allies workshopped proposed Congressional legislation that would prevent exploitation and trafficking: prohibiting recruitment fees, discrimination, and retaliation. Our Day of Action featured 14 meetings with key Congressional offices, including Rep. Jayapal, Sen. Harris, Rep. Pocan, Sen. Blumenthal, and Sen. Cardin.

The energy, passion, and commitment we've seen in only two years of convening demonstrate that we have collective power to bring about change.

Achieving guestwork reform demands gender equity. Through ProMuMi and the Future of (Guest)Work, migrant worker women are ensuring that the reimaged model of migrant worker programs will be free of discrimination and ensure equal opportunity.



Maribel and Reyna—Crawfish Workers Pursue Justice

Maribel and Reyna, two workers on H-2B visas from northern Mexico, saw about 100 of their coworkers get sick with COVID-19 in a crawfish plant in Louisiana. Soon, they had trouble breathing and couldn't get out of bed.

When they went to the hospital to seek medical treatment, their employer fired them and reported them to immigration authorities.

With support from the CDM legal team, Maribel and Reyna filed complaints with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) arguing that their employer retaliated against them for standing up for their right to health and safety.

Their fight for justice was featured in dozens of newspapers in the U.S. and Mexico, recognizing the dangers facing all workers in meatpacking and seafood plants during the pandemic. Their story caught the attention of U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal, who cited Maribel and Reyna's case in a letter urging the NLRB to protect workers who are organizing to demand safe conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In September, Reyna and Maribel joined the Future of (Guest)Work convening where they inspired other workers to tell their stories and take action. During the virtual event, Maribel and Reyna met with legislative offices, including Rep. Jayapal's staff, to speak about the risks guestworker women are facing as well as their vision for labor migration that reflects gender equity.

Research as a Tool for Advocacy

The lack of data often serves as a barrier to achieving policy changes that would correct imbalances of power in guestworker programs. CDM has brought the realities faced by workers to light with rigorous reports uncovering the data, stories, and conflicts of interest in key U.S. industries employing guestworkers.

CDM's extensive outreach and relationships with workers across borders give us the unparalleled insight and access required to reveal the abuse perpetrated by unscrupulous recruiters and employers to hold them accountable.

Thanks to these reports, CDM and allies have been able to deliver hard data to push back against industry resistance and open the eyes of policymakers, pressuring them to increase worker protections through legislative reform and increased oversight.

Featured Publications

Monitoring International Labor Recruitment: A Cross-Visa Exploration of Regulatory Challenges (2011)

At the inaugural meeting of the International Labor Recruitment Working Group (Now "Migration That Works"), this report laid the foundation for comparative analysis of work visas, including common issues and abuses as well as the regulatory framework. This comprehensive overview served as a critical resource for allies to understand the scope of U.S. guestworker programs and shortcomings in regulation and accountability that enable labor violations.

Recruitment Revealed: Fundamental Flaws in the H-2 Temporary Worker Program and Recommendations for Change (2013)

Through a groundbreaking survey and lengthy interviews with hundreds of H-2 workers, *Recruitment Revealed* uncovered how fraud, illegal recruitment fees, and misrepresentation of jobs created the conditions that leave H-2 workers vulnerable to labor trafficking. The report advocated for the creation of a transparent and accountable recruitment system where information on recruiters and jobs would be easily accessible and reports of worker abuses are expediently investigated and remedied.

Taken for a Ride: Migrant Workers in the U.S. Fair and Carnival Industry (2013)

Based on interviews with H-2B carnival workers in Maryland, Virginia, and Mexico, *Taken for a Ride* shed light on deceptive recruitment practices and high pre-employment fees and costs;

wage theft; lack of access to legal and medical assistance; substandard housing; and unsafe work conditions.

Produced in partnership with American University Washington College of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic, the report launched CDM's Fair Workers Fair Wages campaign, prompting an investigation by the New York Attorney General and a settlement that secured hundreds of thousands of dollars in back wages and new safeguards for labor and civil rights.

Picked Apart: The Hidden Struggles Of Migrant Worker Women In The Maryland Crab Industry (2010)

A collaboration between CDM and American University Washington College of Law International Human Rights Law Clinic, *Picked Apart* detailed the harrowing experiences of H-2B seafood workers on Maryland's Eastern Shore and recommended policy reforms.

In-depth interviews with 40 workers exposed recruitment fraud, wage theft, discrimination, and serious health and safety risks that pervade the industry. The report prompted a wave of worker organizing, media scrutiny, and legislation as migrant worker women won important concessions and regulatory changes, such as the prohibition of recruitment fees and requiring employers to pay for the cost of tools and equipment.

In 2020, a followup report, *Breaking the Shell: How Maryland's Migrant Crab Pickers Continue to Be "Picked Apart,"* examined the challenges that remain: the lack of worker protections regarding health and safety as well as gender issues, including discrimination at recruitment, the lack of prenatal care, and family separation.

Ripe for Reform: Abuse of Agricultural Workers in the H-2A Visa Program (2020)

Based on interviews with 100 workers across Mexico who came to the U.S. on these visas in the last four years, *Ripe for Reform* documented discrimination, sexual harassment, wage theft, and health and safety violations by their employers—and a startling lack of recourse. The report also analyzed how, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program's systemic flaws exacerbate workers' vulnerability to the virus.



A New Advocate and a Lasting Legacy

In September 2019, we announced the creation of the Elizabeth Mauldin Memorial Advocate for Migrant Women (EMMA) to honor the memory of our Policy Director who inspired us with her brilliance, poise, and unshakable commitment.

In November 2020, our selection committee named María Perales Sanchez (Mari) the inaugural EMMA. First joining CDM as a volunteer in 2016 and returning as a Policy Fellow in 2018, Mari transitioned to her current role as Communications Coordinator and has been instrumental in our efforts in Mexico, the Eastern Shore, and

Maryland Statehouse. A DACA recipient, Mari was a plaintiff in the Supreme Court case successfully overturning the Trump administration's attempt to end the program.

Mari's advocacy, outreach, leadership, and research experience makes her an ideal candidate for the EMMA—a cross-discipline role envisioned to ensure the experiences

and voices of migrant worker women are represented and uplifted across all facets of our movement.

The EMMA fellowship is meant to carry on Elizabeth Mauldin's legacy and launch the careers of young leaders whose years with CDM will make an incalculable impact in the pursuit of justice.



Shaping the Narrative around Labor Migration

In order to maximize the potential of the migrant worker rights movement, we must shed light on systemic abuses, reform efforts, and worker leadership. In this context, the media can be a powerful advocacy tool to change the hearts and minds of policymakers, employers, and the public.

CDM's media outreach efforts have secured widespread coverage in some of the most-read publications at the local, national, and international levels. By building and maintaining relationships with journalists covering immigration, labor, and trade, CDM influences the media narratives around these issues and serves as a go-to resource for journalists eager for insight on how policy and legislative decisions impact migrant workers.

Key to this progress has been CDM's effort to elevate the voices of workers—giving media the opportunity to hear from those with the most at stake. In addition to coordinating press interviews, our team conducts media workshops to ensure that workers feel empowered to speak about their experiences as well as their proposed solutions. Workers often tell us that the experience of telling their stories energizes them for the fight ahead.



Farms Recruit Mexican Veterinarians for Animal Scientist Jobs, but end up Milking and Cleaning ¹

Crab Pickers. Landscapers. Seasonal Migrant Workers Who Come to the U.S. Could be Extremely Vulnerable to Coronavirus ²

The Washington Post

Migrant Laborers in Maryland Worry Illness Could Affect Visa Status ³

Why Are More Latinos Dying on the Job Again ⁴

POLITICO

EXCLUSIVE: H-2A WORKERS DETAIL VIOLATIONS IN PROGRAM ⁵

¹ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/12/08/mexican-veterinarians-recruited-by-american-farms-low-skill-work/4352557002/>

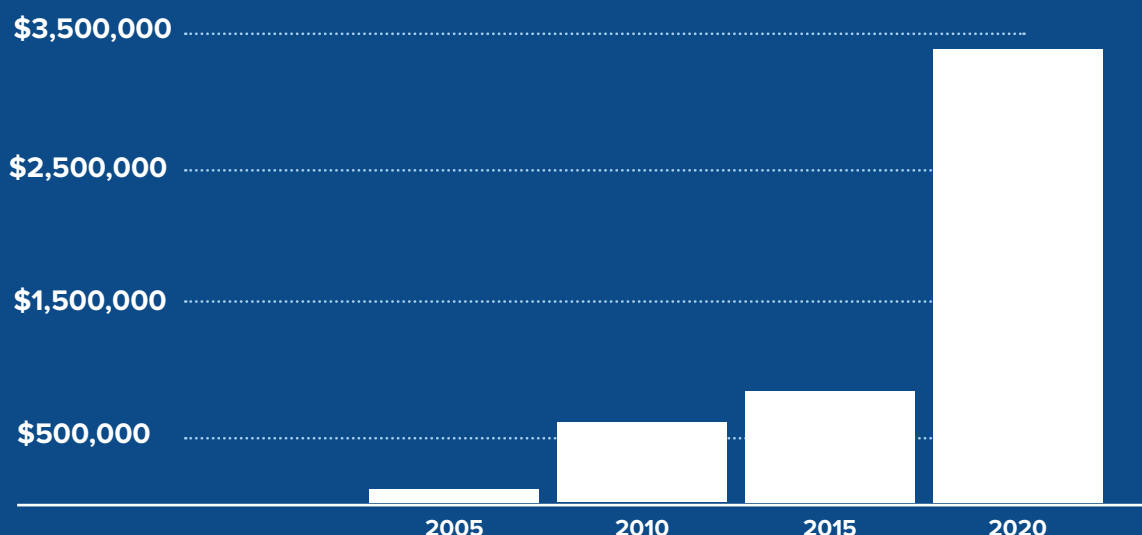
² <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/04/09/coronavirus-leaves-migrant-workers-with-limited-protection/2972859001/>

³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/migrant-laborers-in-md-worry-illness-could-affect-visa-status/2020/09/07/69edd2cc-ed34-11ea-b4bc-3a2098fc73d4_story.html

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/storyline/wp/2014/10/07/workplace-safety-has-improved-dramatically-but-not-as-much-for-latinos/>

⁵ <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-shift/2020/04/08/democrats-seek-higher-pay-for-frontline-workers-in-next-coronavirus-relief-package-786711>

CDM by the Numbers: 2005-2020



Staff

Rachel Micah-Jones
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Nicole Chávez
Executive Assistant and
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Julia Coburn
Director of Operations

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