



**Supporting Immigrant and Migrant Worker Women to Combat Gender-based Violence,  
Harassment, and other Forms of Discrimination**  
Project Narrative

**a. Statement of Need**

Each year, thousands of women travel to the southeastern United States (U.S.) to work in our food systems, including in seafood and agriculture. Most of these immigrant and migrant women are geographically isolated, have limited English proficiency and lack permanent immigration status, making them highly vulnerable to gender-based violence, harassment, and other forms of discrimination (GBVH) in their workplaces, which has far-reaching, detrimental impacts on their economic stability, health, and wellbeing.

For 18 years, Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM) has partnered with immigrant and migrant worker women in the southeastern U.S. to defend their labor rights. Through this work, we have identified pervasive and systemic abuses against migrant women, especially those without regular immigration status, and those in guestworker programs, including the H-2A, H-2B and TN visa programs. Migrant women are routinely channeled into lower-paying jobs because of their gender. They also face sexual harassment, gender-based violence, pay discrimination, and human trafficking. U.S. anti-discrimination, wage and hour, and health and safety laws that should protect these women are rarely enforced. The lack of publicly available gender-disaggregated data on guestworker programs, as well as the nature of the abuse that workers experience, make it difficult to document the true extent of the problem. CDM, however, has received dozens of requests for assistance from migrant women working in

Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland who have experienced GBVH at work and other abuses including forced labor. In many cases, these women had been threatened by their employers with immigration-related retaliation and feared that they would lose their jobs and be deported if they moved forward with complaints. The trends we have identified through accompanying migrant worker women are borne out in CDM's research: our 2021 survey of workers in the protein processing industries found that immigrant and migrant workers were 10 times more likely to experience a workers' rights violation than U.S.-born workers, and women were twice as likely to report having experienced a violation than men.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to their immigration status, LEP status and geographic isolation, immigrant and migrant worker women in these industries face additional barriers to reporting abuse and seeking assistance. Workers often live in employer-controlled housing and depend on their employers for transportation and access to medical care and other basic necessities. Their immigration status often prevents them from accessing basic services, including legal services and public benefits. When women attempt to report abuse, they encounter mechanisms such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) online portal, which are only available in English, thereby denying them access to enforcement mechanisms.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s streamlined deferred action process will help to remove some of these barriers, allowing more immigrant and migrant worker women to come forward to report abuse. The process allows workers in labor disputes to request temporary relief from deportation and continue to work in the U.S. while their claims are investigated—a major victory resulting from ongoing advocacy by migrant workers, with the support of CDM

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<sup>1</sup> Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc., [\*Unpacking the Facts. A rapid assessment of protein processing workers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia\*](#), December 2021

and many other allies. However, for immigrant and migrant worker women to benefit from this new policy, they need to receive trustworthy and accessible information about their rights, as well as assistance to report abuse and request deferred action or other forms of immigration relief. To meet this need, CDM will leverage this new policy to support hundreds of women to learn about their rights, hold their employers accountable, and improve conditions for all workers.

The proposed outreach and know-your-rights activities will make a difference in the lives of immigrant and migrant women by helping to prevent and address employment abuses for thousands of immigrant and migrant worker women. Our work will prevent abuse by equipping immigrant and migrant women with critical information about their rights, enabling them to recognize abuse and make informed decisions regarding employment. Legal intake, referral, and accompaniment activities will provide women with the support they need to leave abusive workplaces, report abuse, and hold their employers accountable. Train-the-trainer activities will build im/migrant worker leadership, support organizing and greatly expand the reach of critical information by helping immigrant and migrant worker women access information and tools to educate their co-workers and community members and become focal points in their communities.

**b. Expected Outcomes and Outputs**

Outcome 1	Migrant and immigrant worker women and their allies and community members will be equipped with critical information about their rights, how to report abuse, and how to access support if their rights are violated.	
	Output 1.1	1,000 know-your-rights materials printed and distributed
	Output 1.2	15 outreach visits by CDM staff and partner organizations

	Output 1.3	1,000 immigrant and migrant workers and their community members, including at least 800 women, receive information on their rights
	Output 1.4	5 multimedia materials on GBVH, and the rights of immigrant and migrant worker women, including infographics and videos, created and distributed
	Output 1.5	At least 500,000 people reached with information on GBVH and the rights of immigrant and migrant worker women through CDM's digital platforms and social media channels
Outcome 2	Immigrant and migrant worker women will have the information and tools they need to recognize GBVH and seek support	
	Output 2.1	150 immigrant and migrant worker women participate in 15 in-person and virtual know-your-rights trainings or workshops
Outcome 3	Immigrant and migrant worker women will access legal services to defend their rights and hold their employers accountable when they experience abuse	
	Output 3.1	24 immigrant and migrant worker women receive legal intakes, referrals, and/or legal accompaniment
Outcome 4	Immigrant and migrant worker women will be equipped with tools and information to educate their co-workers and community members on their labor rights	
	Output 4.1	12 immigrant and migrant worker women will complete a series of train-the-trainer sessions

***Best practices and sustainability:*** CDM will document successful strategies and lessons learned for outreach, legal assistance, and leadership training for immigrant and migrant worker women. We will systematize these learnings and identify opportunities to use them to inform our ongoing work, applying lessons learned and best practices developed through this project to CDM's future legal, outreach, and communications work. We will also share learnings with the DOL Women's Bureau and project partners. CDM will maintain contact with immigrant and migrant worker women engaged through project activities beyond the project period, offering additional opportunities for education and leadership development as well as legal services.

***Systemic change:*** This project will result in systemic change that will benefit immigrant and migrant women beyond direct project participants and beyond the duration of the project. As participants learn about their rights and share that information with their peers, thousands of women will be equipped to identify and report GBVH. As more women report abuse without fear of retaliation, become aware of tools and resources to access justice, and gain access to legal services without compromising their immigration status, the current imbalance of power will gradually be corrected and abusive employers will be held accountable.

### **c. Project Design**

This project will target immigrant and migrant worker women in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, with a primary focus on women in agriculture and seafood industries, including holders of H-2A (agricultural, low-wage, seasonal workers) and H-2B (non-agriculture, low-wage, seasonal workers) visas. Outreach activities will have a secondary focus on guestworker women with TN visas who work in the protein processing, automotive and manufacturing industries in project states.

### ***1. Building Awareness and Dissemination Activities***

In collaboration with long-time allies and partners, CDM will use targeted in-person and digital outreach to engage immigrant and migrant worker women with critical information about their labor rights, GBVH at work, as well as how to report abuse. CDM and partner organizations' staff will participate in a total of 15 outreach visits and events in the project's target states, reaching at least 1,000 individuals, 800 of whom will be immigrant and migrant worker women. CDM and partner organization staff will speak one-on-one with women, learning about their concerns and priorities and providing them with information and resources in response to their specific needs. We will share materials on workers' rights, GBVH at work, as well as information on available support, including CDM's legal services. All materials will be trauma-informed and will center worker women—including survivors of GBVH—as decision makers and agents of change in their workplaces and communities. CDM and partner organization staff will document interactions during each event, recording the gender and industry of workers when that information is made available to us. If potential legal claims are identified, we will refer cases to CDM's legal team and partners where appropriate. In-person outreach will take place in two phases. The first phase, from October-February 2023, will involve materials development in consultation with migrant workers and coordination with partner organizations and other community-level stakeholders to develop a calendar of outreach activities. The second phase, from March-November 2024 corresponds with the seafood and agricultural seasons, and will involve outreach visits and events in the project's target states.

While CDM's in-person outreach will primarily target immigrant and migrant worker women in the southeastern U.S., our digital outreach will target a broader national audience including workers, allies, and the general public to raise awareness of GBVH and the rights of

immigrant and migrant worker women. Our digital outreach and communications teams—with input from our legal team—will develop multimedia content including infographics and videos in English, Spanish, and indigenous languages, including Mixtec. We will share content through CDM’s digital platforms for migrant workers as well as on our social media channels. In planning and executing these digital outreach efforts, CDM will leverage our innovative digital tools, extensive social media following, and proven record of implementing successful targeted digital campaigns that reach millions of workers and allies. We will share digital content and connect with workers through two innovative online platforms designed for and with migrant workers: Contratados.org, an award winning platform that has enabled over two million users to share and access first-hand information about employers and working conditions, and SOL, an interactive intake bot that workers use to access legal services and get answers to their questions about workplace rights.

In developing materials and messages for both in-person and digital outreach, CDM will consult with migrant worker women through our Migrant Defense Committee (or *Comité*), a group of over 100 worker leaders throughout the U.S. and Mexico, as well our Worker Advisory Committee made up of migrant worker women, to ensure that materials are accessible, worker- and survivor-centered, and culturally relevant. All materials will be available in Spanish, and key materials will be available in indigenous languages, including Mixtec.

## ***2. Mitigation Activities***

To prevent and mitigate workplace GBVH, CDM will engage immigrant and migrant worker women in the project’s target states through interactive virtual trainings where they will learn about their rights and how to report abuse and seek assistance if their rights are violated. The

content of these trainings will be developed in consultation with migrant worker women to ensure that it responds to their concerns and priorities and is culturally relevant and accessible.

### ***3. Connecting Women to Additional Services Activities***

Through this project, we will connect immigrant and migrant women who face GBVH to legal and other services. Through our legal intake hotline, we will provide migrant worker women who have experienced abuse with referrals to legal services through our transnational networks. When working with survivors of GBVH, CDM staff will make referrals through our network of reputable, vetted service providers that provide trauma-informed services. CDM's binational, bilingual legal team will also provide legal accompaniment to immigrant and migrant worker women, which may include legal representation in civil litigation, assistance with accessing immigration relief, and/or filing complaints with regulatory agencies or law enforcement (e.g. EEOC, DOL, NLRB, DOJ, and state and local agencies) regarding violations. In total, CDM will provide legal intakes, referrals, and accompaniment to at least 24 immigrant and migrant worker women, and we will use our database to track the gender, geographic area, industry, rights violation or other concern, and type of assistance provided in each case. CDM's existing intake and referral systems and experienced legal team will allow us to begin these activities in October 2023 and continue them through the duration of the project.

### ***4. Facilitating and Encouraging Women Workers and Survivors to Become Focal Points Activities***

CDM will use our Train-the-Trainer Toolkit, "Defending our Labor Rights: Training Guide for Guestworkers," along with additional training materials that we will develop on labor rights and GBVH at work, to support worker women in developing their leadership, equipping them with information and tools to inform their co-workers and community members of their rights. The



toolkit, co-designed and developed with migrant workers, including survivors of GBVH, contains modules that address some of the most common abuses worker women face, including discrimination, workplace health and safety, as well as organizing and facilitation strategies. We will engage 12 immigrant and migrant women in a series of eight trainings, prioritizing engagement of women who work, have worked, or intend to work in the project's target states.

Participants will be recruited through CDM's outreach activities and know-your-rights trainings, as well as through collaboration with the *Comité* and Worker Advisory Committee. CDM staff will develop the training series in Months 3 to 6 of the project, and trainings will take place between Months 7 and 16. In Months 17 and 18 CDM will hold a focus group with participants to learn if and how they have used the information from the training and shared it with their co-workers and communities. CDM will follow up with training participants during and beyond the project period to answer their questions and offer ongoing opportunities for leadership development and engagement in worker organizing. In designing and implementing the Train-the-Trainer series, CDM will draw on its extensive leadership development experience with migrant worker women.

#### ***5. Capacity for a quick start up and contingency strategy***

In planning and executing project activities, CDM will draw on 18 years of experience partnering with migrant worker women in their fight for justice. We have deep relationships of trust with migrant worker communities as well as ongoing partnerships with grassroots organizations, local health departments, and other government agencies in the project's target states that will allow us to quickly begin in-person outreach. CDM is already a trusted source of workers' rights information for thousands of migrant workers and allies who engage with us through our digital platforms and social media, making us well positioned to promptly engage a broad audience

through our digital outreach. Our existing network of worker leaders through our *Comité* and Workers Advisory Committee is prepared to help us identify and recruit women in the southeastern U.S. to participate in both know-your-rights and train-the-trainer sessions. And finally, our existing legal services infrastructure, including our team of experienced bilingual attorneys, legal intake hotline, and binational referral network, prepare us to provide legal intakes, referrals, and accompaniment to worker women. Because of CDM's experience, networks, and existing processes, we do not anticipate significant challenges or delays in undertaking the proposed activities. Should the need arise for us to pivot any planned activities, for example if we are unable to carry out in-person outreach activities due to public health concerns or other unforeseen circumstances, we will adapt and intensify our digital outreach strategy to reach more immigrant and migrant worker women.

#### **d. Performance Evaluation**

To determine the project's success, CDM will document the reach of project activities and partner with migrant worker women to evaluate their impact. CDM staff will use our customized database to track activities and individuals reached. We will securely store, collect and track key information including gender, state in which the individual works, country of origin, and preferred language. We will closely track analytics on our digital tools and social media platforms to measure the reach of our digital content, evaluate what mediums and types of content draw more interest from migrant workers, and adapt our strategy accordingly. We will also consult with worker leaders through the *Comité* and the Worker Advisory Committee to collect input on outreach strategies and messages, ensuring their cultural relevance, accessibility, and effectiveness at reaching immigrant and migrant workers.

To measure the impact of know-your-rights trainings, participants will complete a post-training survey on what they have learned and if and how they plan to use or share that information. For the train-the-trainer series, we will engage participants in a focus group at the conclusion of the series where we will ask them to share feedback on series' content and methodology and reflect on if/how they have/will use what they learned and will share it with co-workers and community members, as well as any potential barriers to doing so. CDM will collect stories documenting the impact of project activities in the lives of immigrant and migrant workers in two ways: first, through the focus group described above, where we will ask participants to share how they have used or shared what they learned through participation in the Train-the-Trainer series and what impact it had for them or their co-workers, and second, we will collect success stories that can inform subsequent activities.

**e. Organizational, Administrative, and Fiscal Capacity**

CDM is uniquely positioned to support immigrant and migrant women in the southeastern U.S. to realize their employment rights by leveraging our existing relationships with advocates, workers, and other stakeholders. Our binational and multilingual team has expertise in employment law, GBVH, occupational safety and health, community outreach and education, policy, technology and communications. With offices in Maryland, Mexico City, and Oaxaca, CDM has relationships with an extensive network of migrant worker communities, and allied organizations. Many of our staff members' longstanding commitment to migrant justice, and their extraordinary cultural competency, are reflective of their experiences growing up in migrant-sending or -receiving communities.

CDM's award-winning legal team has more than five decades of combined experience representing the interests of guestworkers and other low-wage workers. Our staff attorneys have

experience representing workers in high-impact cases and provide intake and legal services to more than 300 individual workers annually. Our legal team has supported migrant workers and their U.S.-based advocates in recovering more than \$40 million in unpaid wages and other compensation. Through litigation support services, CDM has been contracted by law firms, non-profits, and U.S. federal agencies, including the Department of Labor, to carry out client outreach, conduct transnational discovery, and facilitate funds transfers to Mexico-based migrant workers. Since 2005, CDM has built an extensive referral network of allied nonprofit organizations and law firms that represent migrant workers..

CDM has gained a reputation among migrant workers as a go-to source for information and legal services both on and offline. In the 18 years since CDM was founded, we have conducted in-person know-your-rights trainings for over 35,000 workers and community members in over 230 migrant-sending communities, tailoring our materials to the needs of each community. Thanks to our meticulous record-keeping and data management protocols we have been able to produce data-driven reports highlighting how migrant worker women in particular are vulnerable to workplace GBVH. Our Contratados.org digital platform and social media communications channels attract over 100,000 users each month.

Our professional operations, finance and legal teams are prepared to execute the reporting and performance evaluation requirements of this proposal. CDM's operations team includes a finance director with more than 15 years of experience; a full-time accountant; operations and administrative support for specific projects; and five full-time lawyers licensed to practice law in the U.S.. Our institutional protocols have allowed our team to responsibly administer large grants from private foundations and federal agencies, including multiple subagencies of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC). We have also successfully implemented sub-awards from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). A Financial System Risk Assessment Information document detailing the accounting procedures that would allow us to successfully operate and manage federal funds is attached..

If awarded the FARE grant, CDM's Project Coordinator who implemented our Covid response outreach to seafood workers, mostly migrant worker women, will assume project coordination, as they transition out of our Covid response work. Our Outreach Worker will coordinate in-person outreach activities and will assist with program evaluation; our Digital Organizer will oversee digital outreach; a Partnerships Coordinator will facilitate communications with allied organizations; a Staff Attorney will review legal materials and provide legal intake, evaluation, referrals and accompaniment; a Graphic Designer will design materials and infographics; our Advocacy Director will supervise the intake and referral process; and our Executive Director will supervise the project and provide content knowledge and direction. All personnel costs will be allocated evenly during the 18 months of the project.

While we collaborate with a vast network of organizations, including 14 core partners in the states covered by our proposal, our main project partners have provided letters of commitment attached to this proposal. Those organizations include North Carolina Justice Center (NCJC) which will partner with us to organize two workshops and one legal services clinic, and Sur Legal Collaborative, which will distribute materials and information and evaluate claims on behalf of women who have cases involving GBVH in Georgia. Materials developed will be distributed and data about participants will be collected.

**f. Past Performance – Programmatic Capability**

<p><i>1. National Campaign to Prevent and Control Infectious Diseases Among Migrant Workers in the Seafood Industry (Y1)</i></p>	
<p>Grantor: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  Federal Award Number: NU50CK000569  Contact Information: [REDACTED]</p>	
<p><b>Goals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce 60 audiovisual materials and digital assets for digital distribution.</li> <li>2. Engage 19,000 unique users in campaign materials via digital platforms.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 94 audiovisual materials and digital assets produced.</li> <li>2. Over 37,000 unique users in campaign materials via digital platforms.</li> </ol>
<p><i>2. Community-Based Workforce to Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations in Underserved Communities (Sub-Award)</i></p>	
<p>Grantor: U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) through Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  Federal Award Number: U3SHS42196  Contact Information: [REDACTED]</p>	
<p><b>Goals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reach at least 7,323 people in farmworker communities in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia through in-person outreach, including H-2A farmworkers.</li> <li>2. Reach at least 60,000 agricultural community members in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia through targeted digital media campaigns.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reached 7,333 people in farmworker communities in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia through in-person outreach, including H-2A farmworkers.</li> <li>2. Reached 423,404 online users through targeted digital media campaigns.</li> </ol>
<p><i>3. Partnering with Rural Health Departments to Improve Language Access for Migrant and Immigrant Communities: A Cohort Learning Mode</i></p>	
<p>Grantor: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  Federal Award Number: 1 CPIMP221357-01-00  Contact Information: [REDACTED]</p>	
<p><b>Goals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical assistance to three rural local Health Departments (LHD) in Y1 to write and implement language access plans.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work plans and partnerships established with Health Departments in Dorchester County (MD), Somerset County (MD), and</li> </ol>

2. Increased knowledge among LHD staff of how to effectively serve Limited English Proficient (LEP) communities	Central Shenandoah (VA) 2. Language access plans are being drafted
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**g. Budget and Budget Narrative**

CDM is requesting \$350,000.00. A detailed Budget and Budget Narrative are attached.

**h. Organizational Job Quality Factors**

Our commitment to gender equity and workers' rights is reflected in our employment practices. We offer 200 hours of paid time off annually, up to 16 weeks of paid parental leave, as well as paid bereavement leave and flexible schedules for staff with caretaking responsibilities. We provide health insurance and offer retirement plans. We promote salary transparency: all of our job opportunities are published with salary ranges.

CDM is an equal opportunity employer and prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, family responsibilities, physical handicap, matriculation, political affiliations, veteran status, receipt of public benefits, personal relationship status, domestic violence or sexual assault victim status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. CDM complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other applicable federal, state and local laws regarding disability discrimination and accommodation. CDM does not require background checks for our applicants and we do not base any of our hiring decisions on exposure to the criminal justice system. CDM has a complaint procedure in place that provides for an immediate, thorough, and objective investigation of any claim of prohibited harassment, discrimination or retaliation. CDM will immediately undertake or direct an effective, thorough and objective investigation of the allegations.