Host Site: Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc.

Topic of Project: Farmworkers Rights

Location of Fellow: New Paltz, NY

Description of Fellow Project:

An RSLC Fellow will gain experience with all of the types of cases that come to Farmworker Law Project (“FLP”) from agricultural workers across New York, including trafficking, wage theft, workplace health and safety, discrimination, and civil rights. The Fellow’s work will have a special emphasis on housing issues unique to New York farmworkers. In New York, thousands of workers live in uninspected, substandard, employer-provided housing located at year-round labor camps. Some of the issues that have come up within the past year alone are brown drinking water, mold, sewage back-up, cracked windows, exposed wiring, overcrowded conditions that have led to COVID outbreaks, a lack of heat during cold months, and illegal self-help evictions.

An RSLC Fellow will be exposed to FLP’s work at all stages of a case, including intake, client interviews, and investigations. The Fellow will conduct research and draft legal memoranda, draft administrative and court complaints, and identify cases/clients for impact litigation, and have the opportunity to conduct outreach at labor camps around New York State, helping deliver outreach presentations in both English and Spanish. The Fellow would be expected to draft legal education materials focusing on housing conditions and housing rights, and would then be in charge of organizing presentations and developing an outreach strategy focused on housing. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of farmworkers living in overcrowded worker housing, this would involve farmworker rights related to COVID-19 as well. At the end of the summer, the Fellow will have gained experience in all aspects of the work of a rural farmworker legal services attorney.

Applicant Qualifications:

- Although all work-related outreach will occur with a rental car driven by FLP staff from the office, the Fellow must have the ability to get to the office via public transportation or personal vehicle when FLP staff plan to travel to labor camps.
- Proficiency in Spanish and English
- Fellows must be available to conduct in-person outreach around New York State, including overnight (all work-related travel expenses covered)