

Villanova Farmworker Legal Aid Clinic

POLS 420: Praxis Fieldwork Seminar Politics, Power & Policy

Stephanie Gomez, BMC '24

Field Supervisor - Caitlin Barry

Faculty Advisor - Marissa Golden



Villanova's Legal Aid Clinic

- The clinic provides law student with the opportunity to work hands on in real cases in many areas of law.
- There are six clinics (Health Law Clinic, Clinic for Civil justice, Clinic for law and entrepreneurship, Federal tax, Asylum, Refugee & Emigrant, Farmworkers legal aid
- All cases are pro-bono

The Importance of Farmworkers

- Agricultural workers support the \$1.109 trillion agricultural industry in the U.S.
- House Bill 87, passed in April 2011, adversely affecting the state's agricultural output. Georgia lost over \$181 million in less than a year due to increased labor shortages.

Agricultural workers represent some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged people in the U.S. According to the 2015-2016 NAWS survey results, 33% of agricultural worker families had family income levels below the national poverty guidelines.

Guiding Questions

- What does food purchasing have to do with farmworkers?
- How is this connection tied to sustainability goals?
- Why should institutions be held accountable? and how can they implement this as part of their sustainability efforts?
- what have other institutions done?

My Key Take-aways

- I've learned more about what it takes to carry out a research project and the work that many other organization are doing in regards to this issue
- We can have an influence on farmworkers' rights by putting pressure on academic institutions and businesses to also purchase from ethical producers
- I was able to connect the knowledge that I have gained through this experience with past course that I have taken such as Mexican-American Communities.

My Work

I interned with the Farmworkers Legal Aid Clinic at the law school. During my time as an intern, I was tasked with carrying out a research project regarding fair foods purchasing. The focus of the research was to explore how other organizations included fair food purchases into their sustainability policies. The research will serve to persuade Villanova to implement fair food purchasing as part of their sustainability commitments and be a model for other campuses.



Moving Forward

- I would like get Bryn Mawr to also commit to the values of fair food purchasing.
- I hope my newfound knowledge serves to make further connections to the concepts that I learn in future courses.
- I came into the praxis program wanting to get better insight on migrant rights. This opportunity gave me ability to look more deeply into an industry that is reliant on migrants. As a result, this experience has furthered my interest in potentially working with migrant rights organizations.