



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Julian Manrique

**Law School:** Legal-Aid of North Carolina – Farmworkers Unit

**Organization:** Campbell Law School

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**Update 1:** After spending an incredible three weeks in Ghana, Africa with Campbell University, Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law. I am happy to be back in Raleigh and working with the Farmworkers Unit (FWU) here at Legal Aid of North Carolina!

It has been a full week of training and getting into the groove of things, but I'm so thankful for the FWU staff and team for welcoming me with open arms! I am looking forward to the knowledge and experience that I will gain here at Legal Aid!

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**Update 2:** The last couple of weeks with the FWU at Legal Aid of North Carolina has been an incredible learning experience with a ton of new research and hands-on activities.

This last week I was able to help make our H-2A Booklet more accessible for H-2A Farmworkers by taking part in digitizing the booklet. This booklet goes over the rights and protections that H-2A Farmworkers are entitled to. I was happy to take part in having my voice being recorded as a narrator in Spanish! I am very grateful to have the opportunity to utilize my Spanish to help make legal resources more accessible for the Hispanic community!

Thank you to Tomas Garcia for putting together such a great project!

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**Update 3:** A few weeks ago I was able to sit in for a meeting with the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission as Legal Aid of North Carolina Farmworkers Unit plays an active role in these meetings. I had the incredible opportunity to speak with attorneys, law enforcement, and other community leaders on this rising issue here in North Carolina.

Did you know that North Carolina is one of the top 10 states for human trafficking? Make sure to keep an eye out for all the new human trafficking billboards, signs, commercials, and truck skirts!



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I am thankful to the Farmworker Unit and the Human Trafficking Commission for letting me come sit in and learn about this sensitive issue during this meeting.

Thank you to Equal Justice America for assisting me on my path.

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**Update 4:** Last week the Farmworkers Unit (FWU) at Legal Aid of North Carolina began our weekly outreach! This outreach consists of the team going out to visit H-2A and non H-2A farmworkers at their place of residence.

These workers come here to the United States to work the difficult life of a farmworker to provide for their family back home - they are the backbone of the agricultural industry. With their primary language being Spanish, and their limited knowledge of US law it is all too easy for an employer to violate their rights. It is imperative that we continue to educate these workers by driving out to them, informing them of their rights, and answering any legal questions they may have.

We also leave booklets to each worker that includes the rights that they have as H-2A or non H-2A workers. These booklets also allow them to take note of their hours so that they can certify that they are being financially compensated appropriately.

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**Update 5:** It has come time for my final EJA Fellow Update. This summer I have been able to experience a whole different side of the legal industry that I had not experienced before. I am truly grateful and humbled to have been able to spend the last 10-weeks with the Legal Aid of North Carolina Farmworkers Unit (FWU).

In these last 10-weeks I have greatly learned what it means to be an H-2A or non-H-2A worker. I have gained insight on the legal rights that these migrant workers have and more importantly, I have been exposed to the disappointing treatment that they are subjected to.

I have also had the opportunity to spend an immense amount of time researching human trafficking within North Carolina, going through thousands of documents of evidence for a current case, and driving out to the Farmworkers residence where I was able to inform them of their rights.

This opportunity has truly made an impact in my life and I'm thankful that there is a team to care for this vulnerable group. Thank you to the attorneys and paralegals who have guided me through these last 10-weeks, as I surely could not have done it with out them and their guidance!