

## **CATA (Farmworkers Support Committee) Glassboro, NJ**

**1** Please describe your organization briefly, including mission statement, activities, size, etc.

El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA – Farmworker Support Committee) is a non-profit, migrant farmworker organization governed by and comprised of farmworkers who are actively engaged in the struggle for better working and living conditions. CATA's mission is to empower and educate farmworkers through leadership development and capacity building so that they are able to make informed decision on the best course of action to promote and defend their civil and human rights. For the past twenty-six years, CATA has committed itself to facilitating the organizing of farmworkers, based upon the belief that only through organizing and collective action will farmworkers be able to achieve justice. CATA implements its program in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Delmarva Peninsula.

CATA's work is based on the Popular Education Methodology, which develops migrant and immigrant workers' ability to analyze their reality in order to make collective decisions. As such, CATA seeks to develop the leadership capacity of farmworkers through education and trainings on issues pertinent to their lives (human rights, immigration rights, labor rights, health and safety such as pesticide issues, strategic planning, and coalition building). Throughout this process, workers identify and initiate necessary workplace campaigns or community projects. As leaders develop at the local level, they can become involved in regional Councils, the Annual Assembly, and CATA's Board of Directors, and through these bodies participate in the national and international arenas.

CATA's work has resulted in several significant advancements for farmworkers. Mushroom workers organized and won three historic union elections. Workers also formed a tenants' committee which achieved a conciliation agreement by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to address housing discrimination. CATA has successfully fought unjust H-2A guestworker legislation and has through its coalitions built broad opposition to this immigration program, which has been widely denounced as a violation of workers' fundamental rights. Workers' efforts have also resulted in the adoption of a Right-to-Know Law so workers can know what pesticides and other hazardous materials they are exposed to on the work site. More recently, workers and their families have been actively engaged in the labor rights struggle which resulted in the increase of the minimum wage in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Workers have also joined the hundreds of thousands of immigrants in planning activities at the local level in calling for fair immigration standards and have participated in creating the space at the United Nations for migrant voices to have a forum.

**2** Describe **in detail** the work or project an intern will do, **please be as specific as possible**.

The activities of the organization provide many learning opportunities for interns or volunteers. CATA has also been a place where young people can offer the skills and expertise they have already developed. CATA makes every effort to match the interests and abilities of the person with the needs of the organization. For instance, a few years ago, CATA had an intern who was a pre-med student with an interest in migrant health issues. As part of her project, she researched the health care system in the area where CATA works, talked to the farmworker community about their experience with that system, and then made an analysis for CATA regarding health services and where there are gaps in services to the farmworker population.

In the past, Princeton Internships in Civic Service (formally Princeton University Class of 1969) interns assisted CATA in multiple aspects of the organization. Depending on their interest and abilities, interns will be actively involved in research projects, hands-on interaction with farmworkers, and audio/visual projects. The various projects CATA realized through the Princeton University internship program include; the creation of a Documentation Center, development of Pesticide Crop Sheets and a how-to manual for future staff/volunteers to use, development of a farmworker youth program using English as a Second Language classes and soccer activities around international trade laws, filming farmworker labor struggle activities to incorporate into a documentary, an analysis of the health care system available to migrant farmworkers, research on the future of migrant farm labor work force in the US, and the development and implementation of an immigrant survey showing the economic contributions of undocumented immigrants.

During the summer of 2007, the intern interacted directly with the membership by living and working among them. The project consisted in gathering the memory of the struggles of the Zapoteco community in Oaxaca, Mexico and the present relationship that they maintain with the community within the scope of present conflicts.

An internship with CATA would also provide the opportunity to interact with the migrant farmworker community. The intern will be able to go with CATA staff to farm labor camps in New Jersey and discuss with farmworkers the working and living conditions, observe trainings, and participate/assist in any event or activity scheduled. There will also be an opportunity to assist with CATA activities in Pennsylvania with mushroom workers.

**3** Describe any particular skills, background, or qualities you are seeking in an intern

It is important for an intern to have a desire to work on social, environmental, and economic justice issues. We seek someone who possesses interpersonal skills who can work collectively as well as independently. The intern should be culturally sensitive to the Latino community and/or have a strong desire to learn about the community. We look

for someone who can be flexible in their work given that they may need to work some nights and weekends.

We recommend that the intern be bilingual in English and Spanish and have a working knowledge of the various Latino cultures. Possessing computer skills, audio/video skills, and a knowledge of research techniques would also be helpful. We also found that it is helpful (but not required) for the intern to have a vehicle in order to be more mobile.

There are required dates for this internship. Internship must start on \_\_\_\_\_ and end on \_\_\_\_\_ or most include the period \_\_\_\_\_.

Start and end dates for the internship are flexible.

The expected working schedule for this internship:

Begin 9 a.m. End 5 p.m.

Lunch break: Length 1 hour specific time 12 noon

**Housing is included.**