

LEARNING TO LEAD A VULNERABLE WORKFORCE

Leadership-in-Action with Centro de los Derechos del Migrante in Mexico City, Mexico

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INTRODUCTION

Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (CDM) is a binational organization operating in both the United States and Mexico to help migrant workers pursue justice and protect their rights.

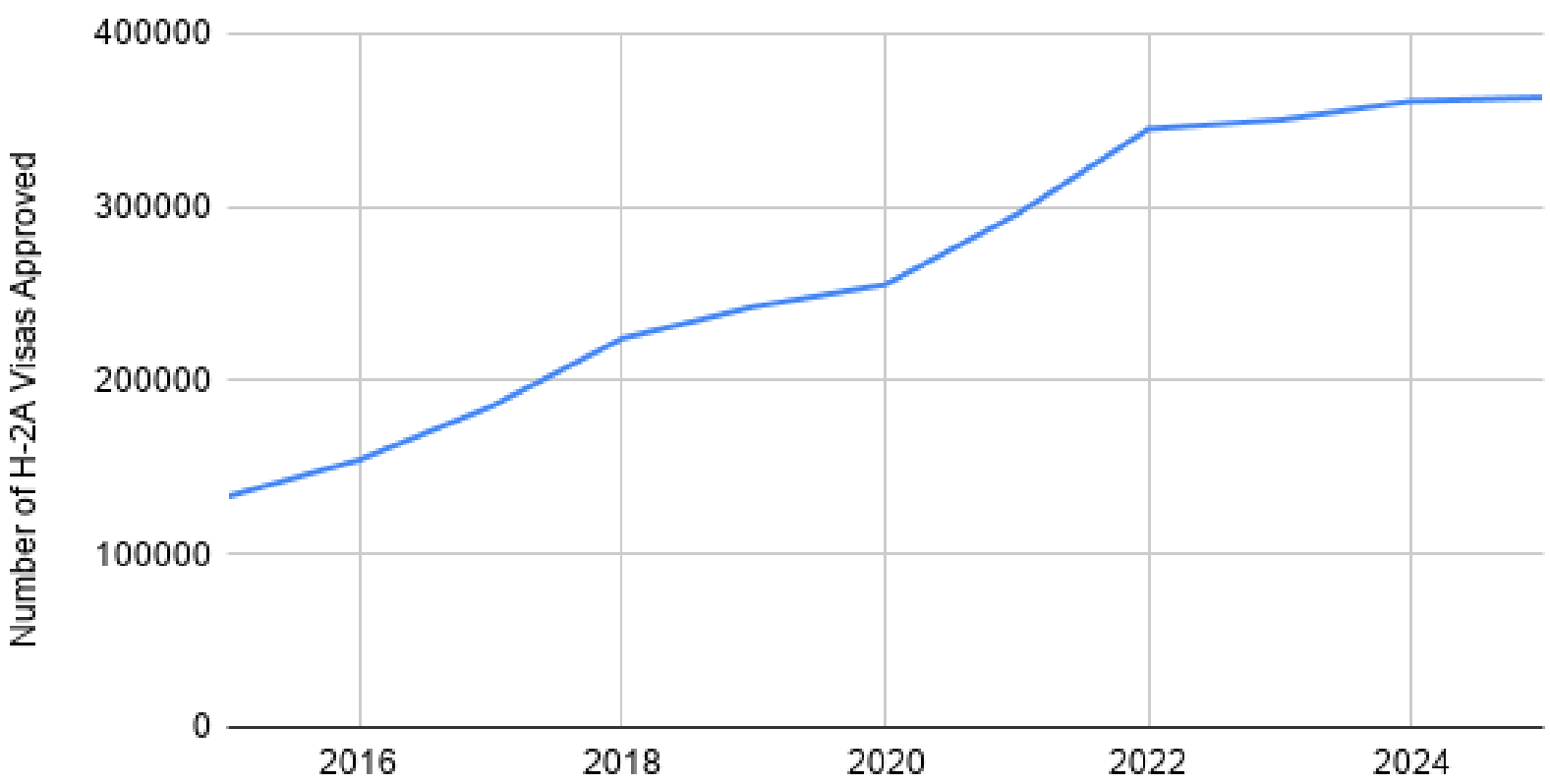
PROBLEM

Just last year, over 300,000 people came to the US on H-2 visas issued by employers. The H-2 visa program essentially ties a worker’s legal status to their employer, giving employers the power to increase profits and productivity while preventing workers from organizing or filing complaints for fear of deportation or blacklisting.

H-2 VISAS

Growth of the H-2A Visa Program in the US

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)



“Know-Your-Rights”

MY WORK

As a summer law clerk, I largely managed intake calls and follow-up via CDM’s hotline from US temporary workers, largely from Mexico, who communicated experiences of abuse and systematic exploitation from their employers. I also produced materials for in-person outreach to migrant worker communities, corresponded with legal aid organizations, helped Maryland crabworkers file Social Security applications, and translated blog posts on CDM’s website, “Contratados,” among other tasks.



PHOTOS



REFLECTION

I aim to continuously sharpen my flexible, committed approach to leading with integrity and empowering migrant workers with transparency and knowledge. By discovering and navigating a city so foreign to me, I have slowly recognized what it takes to move to a new location and adapt, giving me insight into what migrant workers must experience, with the added sense of exploitation and scrutiny. Thus, I hope to cultivate sincere mindfulness and build true, human connections to better engage with migrants and become an ethical and present leader.

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