

The Law School's Loan Repayment Assistance Program allows Carlos Cisneros-Vilchis to continue serving the agricultural community, a path he discovered while at ND Law

Published: January 26, 2021

Author: Denise Wager <link:/news-events/news/authors/denise-wager/>

When Carlos Cisneros-Vilchis first started law school he knew he likely wanted to work in the public interest sector, but he was not sure in what form. He quickly discovered his path during his 1L summer. His interest in the plight of agricultural workers was sparked when he worked for Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE) in Ohio in their Agricultural Worker and Immigrant Rights Practice Group, which provides free civil legal aid to agricultural workers in Ohio.



Through the Law School's generous [Loan Repayment Assistance Program](link:/for-alumni/alumni-resources/loan-repayment-assistance-program/) <link:/for-alumni/alumni-resources/loan-repayment-assistance-program/> he has been able to continue to pursue and practice law in this area.

"It is fantastic to know that I have assistance through Notre Dame Law School's Loan Repayment Assistance Program. I often talk to students from other schools who do not have access to the type of Loan Repayment Assistance Program like our law graduates do," he said. "It is very difficult to choose this career path without this assistance. It lets me stay in the field."

He recently started a new position as the coordinating attorney for the [Farm Worker and Landscape Advocacy Project](link:https://www.flapillinois.org/) <link:https://www.flapillinois.org/> in Chicago. He assists farm workers, landscapers, snowscapers, meat packers, and food and restaurant workers in employment law cases and low wages claims.

"I represent workers who work very hard and for long hours, and who are not being paid properly. This keeps them in the poverty cycle. I help them reclaim the lost wages they need to escape this cycle," said Cisneros-Vilchis.

After graduating from ND Law in 2017, Cisneros-Vilchis was one of the Law School's [Bank of America fellows](link:/news-events/news/notre-dame-law-students-awarded-fellowships/). <link:/news-events/news/notre-dame-law-students-awarded-fellowships/> Through his fellowship he provided consumer financial protection and immigration assistance through the Community Activism Law Alliance in Chicago.

He said while working there he met many challenges and several clients spoke to him. He recalls a client from Africa, a political activist who had been subjected to torture and beatings, and he managed to get him asylum. When talking to a colleague recently he learned the former client was preparing to get his green card and become a permanent resident.

"Stories like this make it worthwhile," he said. "Little by little you are making a difference."

After his fellowship he spent two years at Legal Aid Chicago providing comprehensive legal services to farmworker clients with employment law related matters.

Cisneros-Vilchis said he would still have tried to do public interest work, but it would be very difficult to remain in the public interest field as long as he has without the support of the Loan Repayment Assistance Program. He says it is hard to pay off debt working for a non-profit without the benefit of a firm salary.

Cisneros-Vilchis plans to use LRAP in the coming years. "It is a great program that really helps graduates who do not want to follow the typical law path of clerkship or working for a law firm choose and continue on the public interest career path. It is great knowing that Notre Dame Law School has our backs by supporting and funding LRAP."

Originally from Monterrey, Mexico Cisneros-Vilchis earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. At Notre Dame he was involved in the Hispanic Law Students Association, the Business Law Forum, the Health Law Society, and the Intellectual Property Law Society.

During his 2L year Cisneros-Vilchis was selected to receive the Peter A.R. Lardy Fellowship – a scholarship award established by Notre Dame Law School's Class of 1975 dedicated "to those who exemplify his courage, love, and understanding toward his fellow man."

Share:

[link:https://www.facebook.com/dialog/share?app_id=135465433914446&display=popup&href=https%3A%2F%2Flaw.nd.edu%2Fnews-events%2Fnews%2Fthe-law-schools-loan-repayment-assistance-program-allows-carlos-cisneros-vilchis-to-continue-serving-the-agricultural-community-a-path-he-discovered-while-at-nd-law%2F&title=The%20Law%20School%E2%80%99s%20Loan%20Repayment%20Assistance%20Program%20allows%20Carlos%20Cisneros-Vilchis%20to%20continue%20serving%20the%20agricultural%20community%2C%20a%20path%20he%20discovered%20while%20at%20ND%20Law](https://www.facebook.com/dialog/share?app_id=135465433914446&display=popup&href=https%3A%2F%2Flaw.nd.edu%2Fnews-events%2Fnews%2Fthe-law-schools-loan-repayment-assistance-program-allows-carlos-cisneros-vilchis-to-continue-serving-the-agricultural-community-a-path-he-discovered-while-at-nd-law%2F&title=The%20Law%20School%E2%80%99s%20Loan%20Repayment%20Assistance%20Program%20allows%20Carlos%20Cisneros-Vilchis%20to%20continue%20serving%20the%20agricultural%20community%2C%20a%20path%20he%20discovered%20while%20at%20ND%20Law)

[link:https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=The%20Law%20School%E2%80%99s%20Loan%20Repayment%20Assistance%20Program%20allows%20Carlos%20Cisneros-Vilchis%20to%20continue%20serving%20the%20agricultural%20community%2C%20a%20path%20he%20discovered%20while%20at%20ND%20Law](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=The%20Law%20School%E2%80%99s%20Loan%20Repayment%20Assistance%20Program%20allows%20Carlos%20Cisneros-Vilchis%20to%20continue%20serving%20the%20agricultural%20community%2C%20a%20path%20he%20discovered%20while%20at%20ND%20Law)

