

ABOUT RURAL & MIGRANT MINISTRY



Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) was established in 1981 as a non-sectarian 501(c)(3) organization to serve the immigrant and farmworking communities in resource-deprived rural communities in New York State. RMM's mission is to create hope, justice, and empowerment with farmworking and rural families in New York by building community and developing leaders through advocacy, education, and the arts. We envision a New York State where farmworking and rural families are empowered, are treated with dignity and respect, and have the opportunities and resources they need to thrive. RMM operates four farmworker education centers around New York State in Western New York, Long Island, the Catskills and the Hudson Valley.

Some of RMM's organizational accomplishments include:

- A \$1 million gift from **MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving**;
- Leading the passage of the **NYS Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act**, after more than 20 years of organizing; and
- Recognition by the **Clinton Global Initiative** as a partner with a Commitment to Action.



**HOPE, JUSTICE, &
EMPOWERMENT
IN RURAL NEW
YORK**

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RMM, VISIT [RURALMIGRANTMINISTRY.ORG](https://ruralmigrantministry.org)

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



Overnight Camp. Photo from [USA Today 2024](#).



Campers learn an African dance. Photo from [USA Today 2024](#).

For more than 35 years, Rural & Migrant Ministry has offered cutting-edge, creative and effective programs that support emerging leaders, ages 8 to 18, in rural New York. Each of RMM's youth programs has been created and carried forth by young leaders. These programs form a network across New York that helps members connect to each other, to resources, allies and opportunities. The programs, which include the Summer Overnight Leadership Camp, Summer Day Programs, High School Leadership Programs, College Prep Program, and Youth Leadership Institutes, are unique, and in some cases, nationally recognized.

HIGHLIGHT #1: SUMMER OVERNIGHT LEADERSHIP CAMP FEATURED IN USA TODAY (2024)

- Unites youth from rural, immigrant and farmworking families across New York to build confidence and leadership.
- A **diverse, empowering, and immersive experience** blending culture, learning, and fun.
- **Field trips** like seeing *Hamilton* in NYC (as featured in [USA Today](#)) expand horizons and inspire dreams.
- Youth engage in **art, dance, sports, and storytelling** around the campfire—creating memories that last.

HIGHLIGHT #2: ONE-OF-A-KIND YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

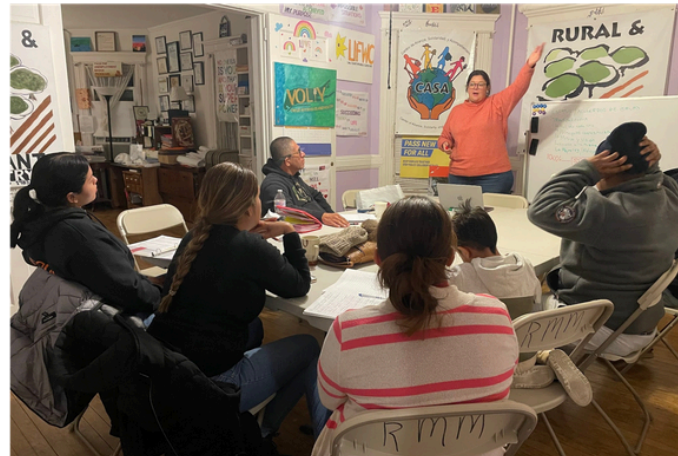
- Youth **choose their own focus areas**—from mental health and racism to immigration policy.
- **Bags for Justice**, a youth-led cooperative with **NYSUT**, links activism and entrepreneurship.
- Alumni become **leaders in politics, education, and national organizations**.
- **95% of participants go on to attend college**, proving the program's life-changing impact.

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ACCOMPANIMENT (STANDING WITH OTHERS)



Farmworker Albany Day, 2025.



The Committee for Equitable and Inclusive Education meets in Riverhead, Long Island.

RMM believes that a just, rural New York—its political, educational, judicial and food systems—requires the participation of everyone. We also believe that those who courageously call out for justice need others to stand with them—to accompany them in this quest. From RMM’s very beginning, the organization has sought to address policies and structures that deny farmworkers and other rural workers equality, dignity, and hope. RMM’s Accompaniment Program is rooted in the belief that those who are affected by policy and decision-making need to be at the table where those decisions are made.

Over the years, RMM has invited a diversity of allies from the faith, labor and academic sectors to help marginalized communities dismantle the barriers they face. Whether advocating for fair labor laws or helping communities to organize, RMM walks alongside those most affected by injustice, to help clear the path toward meaningful, lasting change.

HIGHLIGHT: ADVANCING JUSTICE AND EQUITY ACROSS NEW YORK

- **Justice for Farmworkers Campaign:** After 20 years of organizing, advocacy, and coalition-building, RMM helped lead the successful passage of the **Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act (2019)**—ending a 400-year injustice and securing farmworkers’ rights to a day of rest, overtime pay, disability insurance, and collective bargaining.
- **Educational Equity in Riverhead:** In 2024, with support from the **New York Civil Liberties Union** and the **Harvard Election Law Clinic**, parents from RMM’s **Amandla Worker Education Center** on Long Island challenged unjust practices in the Riverhead School District. Their new **Committee for Equitable and Inclusive Education** now partners directly with the district to ensure fair access and opportunity for all students.

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IMMIGRANT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT



RMM staff member Ana Mendez speaks at a rally held at our Western NY Worker Education Center. Photo from [NY Times](#).



Save New York's Rural Economy: A Caravan of Empathy, at a vigil in Louisville, NY.

In 2025, RMM launched the Immigrant Legal Rights Project, led by an attorney with more than 30 years' experience in Immigration and Civil Rights law. Director Juana Cortes de Torres, along with Senior Political Advisor Milan Bhatt, work at the national, state and grass-roots levels to help immigrants in protecting their rights.

HIGHLIGHT: IMPACT LITIGATION AND LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

- RMM officially became a party to the **federal Birthright Citizenship case** that is now before the Supreme Court.
- RMM is also party to a case **that successfully fought against the Administration's illegal efforts** to gain access to the protected information of undocumented immigrant drivers in New York State.

Expanding RMM's Impact: In the summer of 2025, RMM organized a weeklong Journey of Empathy Caravan that involved close to **2,000 people over a 1,000-mile journey, with 50 stops across rural New York**—as we focused on the impact of the Administration's policies and actions on our rural economy. Subsequently, thousands more engaged through social media as well as traditional media, which included some 20 news reports on the Caravan.

Responding to the crisis:

- **Grass-roots assistance & rapid response:** RMM staff work with community members to respond to immigration raids, including an immediate response to the ICE raid in Cato, NY, that was featured in numerous news stories, such as [NY Times](#), [AP News](#), and [Reuters](#).
- Through extensive Know-Your-Rights and Train-the-Trainer **workshops, advocacy, and partnerships** with legal service providers that include law clinics and pro bono law firms, the Project helps individuals and families to advocate for themselves.

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COMMUNITY GOOD FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



"Rooted in inclusion and justice, we're creating financial pathways for rural and farmworking families across New York."

Rural & Migrant Ministry has embarked on a pioneering initiative in partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of New York, to launch the Community Good Episcopal Federal Credit Union, creating financial equity among rural and farmworking families in New York.

Because many of these families are excluded from traditional financial institutions—and therefore, face undue barriers to building economic stability and opportunity—the Credit Union offers accessible, affordable banking alternatives, including fair, low- or no-cost financial services. Unlike traditional banks that profit from fees, the Credit Union aims to do the opposite, focusing on serving the community rather than exploiting it. RMM makes the commitment to standing with marginalized families and developing creative solutions that model new approaches to systemically entrenched problems.

- **Nearly half of U.S. households lack full access to banking services:** About 42% of U.S. households—over 19 million—are underbanked, meaning they rely on costly alternatives such as check cashing or payday loans.
- **Millions remain completely unbanked:** In 2023, 4.2% of U.S. households had no checking or savings account, and most of these families had no access to mainstream credit.
- **Rural areas face the greatest barriers:** Rural communities are ten times more likely than urban areas to be “banking deserts,” with few or no local financial institutions.

Our Financial Equity Program offers a number of workshops for our members in rural New York. Topics include: Building Good Credit; Preventing Financial Exploitation; Budgeting on a Limited Income; Understanding Loans and Interest Rates; Saving for Long-term Goals; Understanding Credit Unions vs. Banks; Preparing for Home Ownership; Investment Basics; Financial Aid for College; and Starting a Small Business.

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RURAL ACADEMY OF THE PEOPLE (POPULAR EDUCATION)



The women's cooking cooperative Las Chefs Latinas caters meals for our Justice Celebration.



The Rural Women's Assembly is a weekend of learning, sharing, sisterhood and fun.

RMM's Rural Academy of the People (RAP) offers a variety of adult education programs that are initiated and designed by rural, grass-roots leaders. RAP brings people together to learn from one another through participatory education, in which people learn by doing. As adults who are often excluded from traditional education models, rural and farmworking individuals seek alternative ways to learn, grow and develop skills. RMM helps people to expand their knowledge by offering ESL and literacy classes, Know-Your-Rights workshops, supporting the development of business cooperatives and numerous other programs.

HIGHLIGHT #1: ANNUAL RURAL WOMEN'S ASSEMBLY (RWA)

- **Celebrating 20 Years of Empowerment:** Nearly 200 women—from teenagers to elders—gather from rural communities across New York State to learn from, uplift, and inspire one another.
- **Inclusive and Intergenerational:** Rural and immigrant women and their daughters come together for three transformative days of connection, celebration, and growth. The RWA also provides child care, with creative, fun, and educational activities for the younger children.
- **Rich, Engaging Programming:** The weekend features shared meals, musical and dance experiences, dynamic workshops, inspiring keynote speakers, thought-provoking panels, and a resource fair showcasing outstanding partner organizations.
- **Lasting Impact:** Participants leave equipped with new skills, valuable resources, and expanded networks that strengthen their leadership and amplify their voices in rural New York.

HIGHLIGHT #2: NURTURING FOUR WORKER COOPERATIVES

- The Long Island Farmworker Cooperative, which sells flowers and vegetables, and is now independent;
- Cocienda Culturas, a sewing business based in Sullivan County;
- Las Chefs Latinas, a women's catering co-op in Western New York; and
- The youth-led Bags for Justice, which designs and produces screen-printed tote bags and apparel.

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OUR CENTERS



HUDSON RIVER, NEW YORK

Located on 40 acres next to Storm King Mountain, our central office in Cornwall-on-Hudson — known as “the Grail” — is home to the Youth Arts Group, Rural Academy of the People, our summer intern-ship program, and seminarian fellowships and cohorts, as well providing retreat space to our various programs around New York State. We are pleased to make our space available to sister organizations as well.



SULLIVAN COUNTY CATSKILLS

Spark Rural Worker Education Center is located in South Fallsburg, one of the most marginalized counties in New York. Spark was named by youth members who wanted the center to be the “spark for change” in the Catskills. The Center is home to the Youth Economic Group, Bags For Justice (a youth-led screen-printing coop-erative), a youth Summer Day Program, and a variety of monthly community events.



WESTERN NEW YORK

Liturgia Rural Worker Education Center in Lyons is between the Finger Lakes and Lake Ontario. RMM is pleased to partner with the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester through Grace! — a mission of the Diocese — and we share the campus. Liturgia is home to JOY (Justice Organization of Youth), a youth Summer Day Program, our monthly Justice Celebration, Rural Academy of the People, and the women-owned cooking cooperative Las Chefs Latinas.



EASTERN LONG ISLAND

Amandla Worker Education Center is in Riverhead, between the north and south forks of eastern Long Island. Amandla is home to an array of programs, including CASA (Center of Alliance, Solidarity, and Accompaniment), Mujeres de Esperanza/Women of Hope, and VOLIY (Voices of Long Island Youth). RMM is honored to be in partnership and share the campus with the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island and its mission, Centro Franciscano.

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GET INVOLVED



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We would love to invite you to join us in our work. We welcome volunteers; in fact, we can't live into our mission without volunteers! If you are looking to make a difference, give us a call at (845) 485-8627, or email lisa@rmmny.org. Below are some opportunities. Do you have a skill or interest but don't see it listed here? Reach out to us, and we'll find a way to partner with you!

- Gardeners
- Grant writers
- Translators
- Interpreters
- Photographers/filmmakers
- ESL/Literacy teachers
- Tutors and mentors
- Researchers
- Drivers
- Office support
- Camp counselors and nurses
- Hosts for informational gatherings

YOUR DONATION CAN MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE

Do you believe in the work that RMM does? Consider making a financial contribution or becoming a sustaining monthly donor! Your support has a tremendous impact in the lives of the people we serve. Without you, we couldn't offer the vital programs that help marginalized communities in rural New York to thrive in the face of systemic injustice. In these uncertain times, we need your support more than ever!



To donate, scan the QR code at left, or visit <https://ruralmigrantministry.org/donate/>

Rural & Migrant Ministry, Inc., is a tax-exempt charitable organization that is eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions under IRS Code 501 [c] [3]. All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.



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THANK YOU!

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