



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



Name: Helina Meressa

Law School: NYU Law

Organization: Pangea Legal Services

Update 1:

My first few weeks at Pangea Legal Services have been going incredibly well! During my first week, I shadowed an Individual Hearing and witnessed a client win her asylum case! Last week, I worked on a Prosecutorial Discretion request, demonstrating why our client, who is currently in federal prison, should not be put into immigration detention when she is released. I just found out this morning that the request was approved, meaning she won't get picked up by ICE when she finishes her criminal sentence! We've been getting some great news over the past few weeks – I know that won't always be the case, but I'm grateful to have been able to witness it so far. On the agenda for this week is gathering research that will be used to supplement the joint asylum applications of a father and son. I'm looking for information demonstrating that indigenous folks and those with disabilities face a high risk of violence and discrimination in the clients' home country. Overall, it's been a great couple weeks!

Update 2:

It's been a good month at Pangea Legal Services! I'm continuing to work on gathering research to supplement the asylum applications of a father and son. They have a hearing coming up at the end of the summer, so I'll have the opportunity to participate and see how this research helps further their asylum claim. I'm also getting started on an assignment for a new client, who has a prior deportation order from years ago. I'll be doing a bit of campaign work to try and get that order removed, as well as petitioning ICE for prosecutorial discretion (PD). The PD request will involve building up equities, so I'll be working with her family to gather letters of support, among other things. In the coming weeks I expect to start a project where I'll be working with a young person that qualifies for Special Juvenile Status. I'll help draft a declaration on his behalf and a short motion demonstrating why he qualifies. I'm excited to do a bit more client facing work in the coming weeks!

Update 3:

The summer is flying by! I'm working hard to try and squeeze a couple more projects in before the end of the summer. All the work for the big asylum application I was working on has finally been filed, so now I'm getting prepped to do a direct exam and closing statement at the hearing in August. It will be my first time speaking in



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court, so I'm a little nervous but also super grateful for the opportunity. Next week, I'll be getting started on a Motion to Suppress for a client who was illegally arrested by ICE. I haven't done much research on criminal law yet, so I'm excited to learn more about the Fourth Amendment. I've also been in the process of drafting and editing letters that will be used for a different client's prosecutorial discretion request. We're hoping that getting a signed letter from her congressional representative will help convince ICE to rescind her prior expedited removal order. It's definitely felt like a bit of a balancing act this past week or so, but it seems to be good practice for what life as an immigration attorney will actually be like.

Update 4:

I cannot believe I only have 2 weeks left with Pangea! My workload has increased quite a bit in these last few weeks, but I've had good practice in juggling multiple assignments. My most exciting new project is a motion to suppress, challenging an ICE arrest of our client due to a fourth amendment violation. I haven't learned much about the fourth amendment in law school yet, but the project seems like it'll be super interesting and different from a lot of what I've been working on this summer. I've also started prepping the direct exam questions and closing statement I'll be delivering at an individual hearing next week. I'm hoping to wrap up the SIJS declaration and motion I've been working on in the next few days, and will be squeezing in some work on a Motion to Reopen for a time sensitive case. It's hitting me how much I've learned in these past few weeks and I'm so appreciative of the guidance and mentorship I've received at Pangea.

Update 5:

I am so thankful for the experience I had at Pangea this summer. I was given the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, from client interviews, to research for novel arguments, to preparing for a hearing in court. Along the way, I received so much support and encouragement from my supervisors and mentors. This summer I witnessed many wins. My request for prosecutorial discretion was approved, enabling a client leaving federal custody to go home to her family rather than to ICE detention. Two asylum cases I worked extensively on were granted on the papers, something I'm told is very rare in immigration court. A client's congressman agreed to sign the letter of support I drafted, requesting that ICE rescind her prior deportation order. So many of the hearings I shadowed or strategies I heard discussed in meetings ended in favorable outcomes for clients. Unfortunately, I know this is not the norm. It was exciting to have a hand in some of these wins, but I think what I appreciated the most about this summer was seeing the way Pangea is working to abolish ICE, detention, and all systems oppressing immigrants. Pangea seems to me to be doing movement lawyering at its best. The organizers did fantastic work bringing detained and non-detained folks together to identify issues they were dealing with. Where applicable, they brought legal issues they needed support with to the attorneys, who broke down the legalese and made information as accessible as possible. Pangea gave me a glimpse as to how we can work together to create a better world for ourselves, and what my role in that fight could look like. I went into the summer thinking I might want to be an immigration attorney, but unsure about if I would enjoy the work. Pangea helped me confirm that I'd like to pursue a career in this field. It has shown me that there are organizations out there that are in line with my values, and are intentional about creating sustainable and supportive work environments in a field prone to burnout. I could not be more thankful to Pangea and EJA for helping me make this summer possible.