



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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**Law School:** University of Michigan

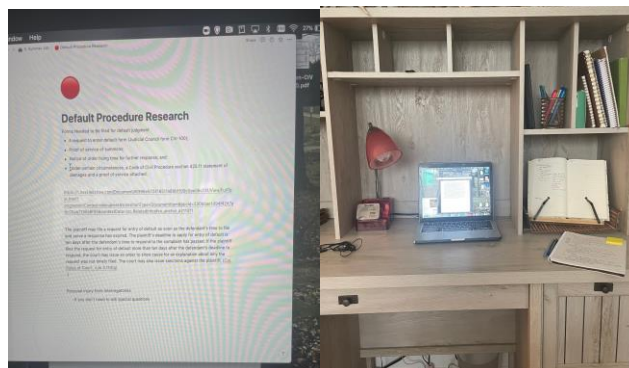
**Organization:** Public Counsel

**Update 1:** Today marks the end of my third week working at Public Counsel as a Summer Law Clerk. I am working as part of the Aubrey Irmas Project for Women and Girls Rights. The last three weeks have given me the opportunity to familiarize myself with the team, some of the cases being worked on, and the city of Los Angeles itself.

This is my first time working a full-time job that is completely virtual, so that has required some adaptation. I unfortunately have only been able to meet my co-workers over zoom in our twice weekly team check ins. Despite the limited face time however, I have felt very welcomed into the team. It is clear that everyone I work with is extremely dedicated to our clients and ensuring that they receive justice. My most consistent co-worker is my roommates cat Momo (pictured below) who spends the day laying on my bed while I work at my desk setup (also pictured below).

The main case I am working on right now is for a client who was assaulted by a male acquaintance for refusing to engage with them intimately. My main role at the moment has been to do a lot of civil procedure research for some issues that we have faced with the defendant's answer to our complaint. Though not the most exciting aspect of working on a case, it has given me the chance to familiarize myself with some of California's specific rules.

Public Counsel takes Juneteenth as a holiday, so I am looking forward to a three-day weekend. I will likely be heading to the beach, which I have been taking full advantage of during my time here. I also hope to attend some of the events in honor of Juneteenth throughout LA of which there are many throughout the weekend.





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**Update 2:** Last week marked my first week heading into the Public Counsel office. It was so great to see people outside of the Women and Girl's Rights Unit and to get the chance to see the culture of Public Counsel. I finally got to meet my team in person during our weekly team staff meeting. It definitely was a nicer dynamic to speak in person as opposed to over zoom.

My main content focus has been doing a deep dive into disability law for an OCR complaint I am working on. The complaint will be a combination of Title IX and ADA/504 claims, so I have been researching how these policies compliment and supplement one another. The area of disability law I am working on has a lot of case law, which is both exciting and a bit overwhelming. I've been spending a lot of time on Westlaw comparing cases and trying to find ones that fit the facts of the specific case I am working on. This process has also provided useful insight into the areas of disability policy that really could use some improvement. Though seemingly comprehensive, there are quite a few exceptions to ADA and 504 policies that allow for certain individuals to lose out on necessary rights.

Pictured: I have included an image of me at the office for the first time.





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**Update 3:** This week, my main focus at my job was working on an OCR complaint for a student who experienced rights violations relating to disability and Title IX claims. I've been spending a lot of time doing legal research, trying to find useful case law for the complaints. The OCR complaint has been interesting because it has a similar structure to a complaint that you would file in court, but has a different purpose and audience. I've had to adapt my approach to both research and writing, considering the fact that the complaint is going to a government agency who will evaluate and investigate the claim as opposed to a judge who will rule on the basis of established law. It's hard to know for sure what the outcome of the complaint will be as there is limited case law and a lot of discretion left to the OCR office. However, because we are bringing both disability and Title IX claims, I'm hoping the outcome will be positive for our client.

I've also spent additional time exploring LA this week, and it has further cemented my desire to work in this city. It's wonderful to see places like public counsel who have such a strong and long history in the city, with many connections to other organizations and legal professionals.

Pictured: Some scenes from around my neighborhood, and Momo, who keeps me company while I work.



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**Update 4:** With the end of my time at Public Counsel quickly approaching, I am starting to wrap up the projects I have been working on this summer. It has been interesting to be involved in real cases and see what the legal process is actually like.

Our team has reached an interesting point on a gender-based violence case, as we have received no response to the discovery request we sent to the defendant. This individual is not represented and thus likely has limited knowledge about the legal process. Normally, when a defendant does not respond to a discovery request, a motion to compel would be filed with the court, but we are considering what the best options are in this situation. Can harm be minimized if we call the defendant and have a conversation about how important meeting the deadline for these requests is?



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I also have the opportunity to have some client interaction this week as I will be doing an intake for a new client. I am looking forward to the experience as I think it will provide valuable insight into client support/relations. I hoping to provide a balance of legal spotting and thinking about the case with also being supportive and sensitive to the harm that the client has faced.

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**Update 5:** My last day at Public Counsel was two weeks ago, and since then it has been wonderful to reflect on all of the time that I spent there. I am so thankful for the kindness and openness of the Women and Girl's Rights Project. It is amazing to see such passionate and knowledgeable people working in the field of gender justice.

I am also so grateful for the breadth of legal work I got to do this summer. I really had the chance to see multiple aspects of what kind of work is happening in the public interest space.

I would say the majority of my work focused on the OCR complaint I researched for a sexual assault and disability claim. I found this area of law to be extremely interesting, particularly when considering where disability and Title IX law intersect and what is left out. There is definitely room for policy that addresses the gaps between the two laws.

One of my favorite parts of this summer was having the chance to work one on one with a client while doing an intake. I loved having the chance to have a personal experience with the client, while also working on my issue spotting skills.

I also appreciated the litigation work I did this summer, particularly considering that I plan on being a trial lawyer. It was really neat to be able to draft motions and interrogatories and learn more about civil procedure in California Courts.

I am so grateful to Public Counsel for the welcoming environment they provided this summer and the Equal Justice America Fellowship for making my time in Los Angeles possible.

My summer has been made possible by Equal Justice America's Legal Services Fellowship.