



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



Name: Miguel Villegas

Law School: University of Michigan law school

Organization: Child Advocacy Law/Pediatric Advocacy Clinic

Update 1: I've been having some amazing experiences working here at the Child Advocacy Law Clinic. Since starting, I have been able to extend a hand to many families in desperate need of legal assistance. I, along with my fellow student attorneys, have had the chance to work directly with clients as well as work on large-scale systemic issues. It's been an enlightening experience to see how children and parents alike interact with our social support resources. Unfortunately, this also means I've come to see the many shortcomings of these services. However, I am excited to be working to make the change I want to see, and I look forward to continuing this kind of work in the future.

Update 2: One of the best experiences I've had during my summer internship at the child advocacy law clinic and pediatric advocacy clinic is the chance to meet my clients face-to-face. Being able to sit with the people I've been helping and discuss their situation has given me a new appreciation for the work I've been doing. The typical work behind a computer screen or at a desk in an office that is so often associated with legal aid can make us forget the real impact that our work has on people. For that reason, I'm endlessly grateful that the clinics I work with give me the chance to get face time with my clients.

Update 3: My continuing work with the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic at Michigan law has been nothing short of amazing. The clinic has given me and my fellow student attorneys the opportunity to work on large-scale systemic issues which are currently plaguing Michigan citizens' access to quality healthcare. These projects give us the chance to collaborate with other organizations, both legal and otherwise, to bring these issues to light and



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to be a voice for the underrepresented populations being affected. Though the work has been tough, it has been endlessly rewarding and I look forward to seeing what else our team will be able to accomplish.

Update 4: As my summer internship with the Michigan Law Clinics comes to a close, I believe one of the best experiences I was able to extract was the chance to appear in court on behalf of my clients. Not all law students get the opportunity to go on the record in a court case prior to their graduation, and this is an aspect of law school that I continue to believe is seriously lacking. Though my cases and appearances were far from high-profile, they meant the world to my clients and it was my first opportunity to use my legal knowledge to help make the type of change I wish to see in the field of child advocacy. I want to thank both my clinics and the court staff of Michigan for giving me this chance.

Update 5: As my summer internship at both the Child Advocacy Law and Pediatric Advocacy Clinics comes to a close, I am left to reflect on my time there. This summer was my first experience being able to take what I have learned over the past year and apply it in a way that truly changes the lives of those in my community. Unlike other 1L summer internships, the clinics at Michigan Law give students like me a real taste of what it is to be a lawyer. Managing cases, leading hearings, interacting with the court, and contacting clients. All of this along with plenty of experience researching and writing on the laws in our areas of interest, make these clinics truly unique experiences and put law students in a great position going forward in their legal careers.

As for myself, my summer here has piqued my interest in pursuing a career in litigation. Preparing for and leading hearings has been my favorite experience in law school thus far. As I am looking toward my opportunities for my 2L summer and after graduation, I hope to encounter my chances to be in court watching our justice system at play.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the help of my fantastic supervising attorneys. Their expertise and experience cultivated an environment conducive to creativity, growth, and most of all a sense of community between myself and my fellow student attorneys. I will forever be thankful for their teachings and kindness.