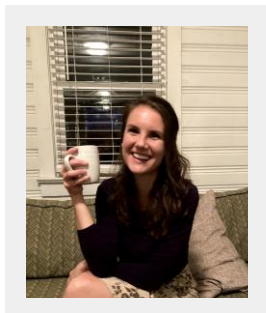




# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Courtney Weber

**Law School:** The University of Texas School of Law

**Organization:** East Bay Community Law Center

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**Update 1:** Excited and grateful to join EBCLC and Equal Justice America in their commitment to promoting equity for all this summer! Our consumer justice team is defending our rights and our money.

I've really been enjoying my internship thus far and am truly so grateful to EJA for giving me the opportunity to be here. My main work for the past two weeks has been drafting a trial brief in defense of a client being sued by a big bank. I've never felt as motivated to write a brief as I have been for this client! EBCLC is helping me develop foundational tools for my career as a lawyer while also allowing me to serve my community, and for that I am truly thankful.

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**Update 2:** Update #2 on my consumer justice summer - we're helping clients review credit reports! Make sure to review yours at least 1/year to catch fraud and errors. Grateful to Equal Justice America for this opportunity.

My team has been meeting with clients at our regular Friday clinics. We start almost every meeting with a review of our client's credit report as we want to catch things like identity theft and fraud. We've had many clients be denied housing or credit because of something on their credit report that turned out not to be true! I'm getting good experience disputing these inaccuracies with the "big 3" credit reporting companies and have learned how to help clients put a 'credit freeze' on their accounts while we help them figure things out. It's been a great few weeks!

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**Update 3:** Update #3 on this consumer justice summer - did y'all know that dental fraud is on the rise? If pressured into taking a loan, it's probably a scam!

I've been seeing multiple clients in our clinic who are victims of dental fraud. This is when a dental office falsifies or exaggerates the work that they'll be doing in order to ensure a higher payout, usually by getting the patient to take out a high interest loan. Luckily there are consumer protections when someone signs a contract like this under pressure/duress, so it's been interesting seeing how our attorneys navigate these situations. As always, thank you for helping me make this experience possible this summer!



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**Update 4:** It's the final stretch of my 1L summer internship, and just want to say a big thank you to Equal Justice America for making my work with low-income consumers possible. I'm excited to bring these lessons in my 2L year!

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**Update 5:** in our summer work. Your funding made it possible for me to advocate alongside low-income consumers this summer, and for that I'm truly grateful!

I want to again thank you all at EJA for making my summer work at EBCLC possible. There is a growing awareness among law schools and public interest students that this work – advocating for low-income, under-resourced communities – is NOT charity, but rather an essential component of a functioning, just society. Through your financial support of us students, EJA pushes back on the idea that only big-law positions should be funded, rewarded, and lamented. I am beyond grateful for EJA's funding as you all helped me maintain a living wage this summer while offering necessary legal services to my community.

This summer, I learned foundational skills for my career in legal services. EBCLC supports clients at all points in their legal journey, meaning that we did everything from answering basic questions about a potential scam to drafting initial disclosures for clients in affirmative litigation related to identity theft. In all of these phases, I learned to meet people where they were at by humbly learning along with them. I was faced with many scenarios where "I don't know – but I'll get back to you soon" was the best response. I did my research, talked with my colleagues, and always followed up. In doing so, I built relationships with clients over the summer as well as with my supervisor and fellow EBCLC interns. This spirit of collaboration is a skill that is not emphasized in law school, an environment that often has students competing with one another for the best grade, the spot-on Law Review, or the most prestigious clerkship. More than anything, this internship at EBCLC showed me how despite the perception, lawyers don't do their work alone. It is in collaborating with others (clients included!) that we are the most effective advocates. I'm grateful to have had a supervisor that taught this by example and fellow interns who valued this practice (even through our remote work).

In addition, I learned how to advocate for myself this summer. When a workplace conflict arose, I found myself questioning whether or not to say something. In all honesty, it was one of the most difficult work experiences I have had, and that comes after working in social services for over seven years before attending law school. After brainstorming with fellow interns and former colleagues, I realized that I had to advocate for myself, as doing so meant that I was also advocating for others who may experience similar things in the future. It also occurred to me that if I couldn't advocate for myself, I would never truly be able to advocate for my clients. So much of movement lawyering is about putting ourselves in uncomfortable situations, defending those that others want to forget about, and speaking up against injustices that are otherwise acceptable under capitalism, sexism, and racism. I, along with fellow interns, was able to take my concerns to the director of our program. In doing so, I know that we made our organization a better place for interns and clients, and I'm beyond grateful for how our feedback was received at EBCLC.

In reflecting at my time at EBCLC, I am confident that I couldn't have had a more rewarding 1L summer experience. Thank you so much for making this possible for me and other interns across the country!