



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:

Name: Hailey Conner

Law School: Loyola University Chicago

Organization: TeamChild

Update 1: Summer is beginning, and I have the honor of providing another round of EJA Fellow Updates as a EJA Fellow. This summer I will be working for TeamChild, a juvenile justice legal aid organization that focused on both direct legal representation and policy advancements. They are youth-centered and I'm excited to learn their way of lawyering. I will be working primarily on record sealing and expungement cases for those with juvenile records. While this may seem straightforward, it is often a hurdle or roadblock for young adults who are trying to secure stable employment or housing. I've made the road trip from Chicago to Seattle and will keep yall updated throughout the summer.

Update 2: My internship has hit the ground running and I can't believe it's already time for my second EJA Fellow Update. My brain has been a sponge the last week or two absorbing all the state-specific laws and policy advancements of focus. While much of it is the same, some procedural or best practices differ from state to state so it's been helpful to learn. This week I was able to meet with a client we've been working alongside for a while now. They shared their struggles with their rural school district and their concerns of discrimination or implicit bias. It sparked a really helpful conversation with my supervisor after the fact as well – where we got to break down our concerns as well as how best to communicate them to a school district that may not see any wrongdoing on its face. So far, I'm incredibly encouraged with the client-led, client-centered approach to lawyer that TeamChild implores. More to come as the summer progresses!

Update 3: This EJA Fellow Update truly snuck up on me. We're at the point in the internship where I have gained enough knowledge to do some items independently – such as drafting court documents or editing motions – before sending it off for approval. I have a client, who has worked with TeamChild for many years now, that has a pretty significant case coming up in court. Additionally, the organization just found out a case we previously won was approved for appeal, meaning there's now a Washington State Supreme Court case to prepare for. Lots of moving parts, but all very exciting! More to come as the summer progresses!

Update 4: YOU GUYS! This EJA Fellow Update might be the best one yet. We had court this last week for a client that's been working with the org for ages. It was the last thing this client needed to be resolved – if resolution was agreed on, this client would be free from the system for the first time in over a decade. The work and prep and resilience it took from this client was inspiring to say the least – and even more so when we got to



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see the judge grant relief. The client worked for a decade to hear a judge grant him relief. And we got to be there when it happened, celebrate with the client thereafter, and ensure supports were present for their life after. I love this work, and this client was a wonderful reminder of the “why”. More to come as the summer progresses!

Update 5: It's somehow already time for my last EJA Fellow Update and I feel so thankful for the work I got to do this summer. I can confidently share that the fellowship award changed lives – both clients' lives as well as my own. As previously shared, I was able to spend the entire summer working full time for TeamChild located in Seattle, Washington. The internship allowed me to work directly under their Director – meaning I was a statewide intern, allowing me to see direct client work as well as work with the policy team on legislation efforts – while also taking on my own limited caseload. Through our work on record sealing/vacating, education advocacy, and policy research/initiatives I was able to learn a great deal about the intersections of juvenile law. I may be a tad belated in writing this because I was hopeful to have a big ending for you – and I do! TeamChild has offered me a job after graduation, and I accepted! I will be their new Staff Attorney for one of the more rural areas in Washington. I will continue to work on similar cases with similar clients, and look forward to being able to continue to help individuals find stability in life – through juvenile justice work and more!