



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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Law School: Northeastern University School of Law

Organization: Justice at Work

Update 1:

Hi everyone! I am so excited to announce that I am Justice at Work's summer intern, and that my internship is being dually funded by both the Peggy Browning Fund and Equal Justice America. Being an Equal Justice America fellow has already been such a rewarding experience, and I only just finished my third week with Justice at Work!

Justice at Work is a legal non-profit that emphasizes collective power and self dignity and supports low-wage non-citizen workers when they take action in response to workplace abuse or mistreatment. Justice at Work works closely with community worker centers, and offers legal services and provides training to community members. You can read more about Justice at Work and their mission here: <https://jatwork.org/>

During my short time at Justice at Work, I have been able to take part in some of the training offered, including the annual summer institute. This year's summer institute is centered around mediation and conflict resolution. We completed our third session this week, and will finish out the training next week. In addition to honing my conflict resolution and mediation skills, the summer institute has also provided me with a platform to connect with workers and workers' rights advocates within the greater Boston area. I am looking forward to completing the institute next week and utilizing the skills and knowledge I have gained in both personal and professional components of my life.

In addition to the third session of the summer institute, Justice at Work celebrated workers and community organizers at the 12th Annual Celebration and Solidarity Awards. It was an incredible evening filled with community, dancing, and worker empowerment.

To close out my first #EJAFellowUpdate, I'm sharing the fellowship's fundraising page: <https://give.classy.org/EJA2023>. Equal Justice America provides funding for students like myself, who are



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providing necessary services to communities in need. There are hundreds of fellows throughout the country who are doing incredible public interest work, and their work is incredibly inspiring to me. If you're unable to donate, please consider sharing the link or just spreading the word!

Update 2:

Hi everyone! I'm back with my second #EJAFellowUpdate. A lot has happened since my last update.

This past Wednesday, the Justice at Work team headed to Rhode Island for the evening. Justice at Work is lead counsel on a class action case, and through the support of community organizers and worker centers, had an informational session for potential class members. It began with a brief discussion of the case, which involved letting workers know the terms of the settlement. Then, before we knew it the team began helping workers fill out claim forms. Workers sometimes have difficulty reading, writing, or with technology generally, so our team was there to make sure they successfully completed their claim forms. After around three hours, the team helped over fifty workers submit claim forms.

Wednesday evening I was reminded of why I chose to go to law school. Working class, immigrant communities are the foundation and backbone of our nation, and yet they are also the communities that are so often taken advantage of and exploited. My community at home in Miami looks very similar to the community I had the privilege of assisting this past week. Every worker I spoke with reminded me of my family and my community. One of the last workers I assisted reminded me of many of the women and elders in my community. The worker overheard another worker being asked plenty of questions, and immediately asked me why I wasn't asking her those same questions, because she had a lot to share and wanted us to know about the injustice and exploitation that was happening. This resilience and tenacity in the face of adversity continues to fuel my personal and professional endeavors, and I am so fortunate to have the opportunity to do this work.

I'm once again including EJA's fundraising page here: <https://give.classy.org/EJA2023>. Equal Justice America helps support students like myself who are doing public interest work this semester. If you're able to, please consider donating or sharing the fundraising link.

Update 3:

Hi everyone! I am here again with another #EJAFellowUpdate.

This past Saturday, the Justice at Work team once again left Boston for the afternoon. We headed to New Bedford, Massachusetts for Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores' (CCT) monthly Pescando Justicia or Fishing for Justice meeting. New Bedford is a hub for seafood processing facilities on the east coast. If you've eaten



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seafood lately, there is a strong chance that many workers involved with CCT, or individuals in incredibly similar situations, packaged or processed that seafood.

Pescando Justicia is a meeting space for workers in the fishing industry, specifically within seafood processing facilities, to come and discuss content all related to their workplace. This month's agenda included workers discussing workplace conditions, a brief presentation and question and answer session on both federal and state child labor laws, and information about another informational session that will be held next month in Providence (this is related to the class action case I discussed in my last EJA update!). Pescando Justicia is a space for workers to come together to share and discuss what is going on at work and how they can utilize collective action and the law to better their workplace conditions, ensuring that they receive the workplace justice we are all entitled to, regardless of citizenship status. The Justice at Work team comes to these meetings mostly to listen to workers share their experiences at work and answer any legal questions the workers have.

Throughout the meeting, I was reminded of Justice at Work's mission of supporting worker centers, and the foundational ideal of replacing fear with empowerment through collective action. These workers were not hesitant to share the injustices that were happening to them at work, and they turned to each other, CCT, and the resources available to them to see what could be done.

Once again, I'm closing out my update with a request for you to donate to EJA's fundraising page if you're able to: <https://give.classy.org/EJA2023>. Additionally, I'm also encouraging you to give to Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores so they can continue supporting indigenous and immigrant workers as they organize for justice. <https://cct-newbedford.org/support-our-work/>.

Update 4:

Hi everyone! As the summer comes to a close, I'm back with another #EJAFellowUpdate.

This past week, I joined the Justice at Work team at a mediation involving a worker who was subjected to a hostile work environment throughout her employment.

Throughout the mediation session (which lasted over 5 hours!) I was reminded of Justice at Work's summer institute, which I had the pleasure of attending throughout the month of June. The summer institute focused on conflict resolution and mediation for workers in typically low-paying jobs.

My time with Justice at Work has shown me that everyday skills, like mediation and conflict resolution, are pivotal in both high-paying and low-paying industries. The workers I have had the privilege of interacting with this summer utilize very similar techniques to what I saw in the mediation session last week. The only difference is one of these industries (the legal industry) comes with social capital and prestige, while many low-paying,



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typically immigrant worker-lead industries (including the agricultural and food-processing industries) do not. The same skills are utilized in both societally-deemed “important” professions and the low-paying manual labor jobs that are so often dismissed as “unskilled labor.” I challenge you to take a step back from your day to day routines and examine the systems we operate in, questioning how we are conditioned to think and how we can change these systems to be better.

As always, I’m ending my update with a request for you to donate to EJA’s fundraising page: <https://give.classy.org/EJA2023>. My work, in addition to many other law student interns, has been funded by EJA this summer. Our work is pivotal to the legal field, and we are the next generation of public interest attorneys.

Update 5:

Hi everyone! I’m here with my final #EJAFellowUpdate.

I had an incredible summer with Justice at Work, and finished my fellowship feeling inspired and motivated.

During my last few weeks with the team, I had a routine one on one with Mike Felsen, who gave me some incredible advice as I continue my law school journey and begin planning for my post-graduate endeavors. As I begin my final year of law school, I find myself gravitating towards immigration law, with overlap in other legal industries. During our conversation, Mike told me that he didn’t have much to offer in the way of immigration law advice, but could advise me more generally. He told me that as I begin planning for my first post-grad job, I should make a list of qualities that I look for in my ideal work environment. He also encouraged me to look within, examining what kind of work I would find fulfilling, what skills I bring, and what skills I possess that may need further development. Although Mike thought his advice was very general, I found this to be some of the best post-grad advice I have heard.

Reflecting on my time with Justice at Work and Mike’s advice, I find myself taking what I learned this summer into the remainder of my legal education. Justice at Work is an organization that acknowledges the humanity and personhood of everyone involved in the organization, from the workers the organization serves, to the staff and individuals who work in the office building. Sometimes in the legal profession, it is easy to forget this component of both ourselves and the populations we serve. Upon graduation, I hope to work with an organization and individuals who see the humanity and personhood in every individual we interact with.

This experience also reaffirmed my choice to serve immigrant communities in a variety of capacities. Every time I interacted with a worker this summer, I knew that I had made the right choice. I hope to continue working with immigrant communities after graduation. It has also made me realize that providing services to immigrant communities is not solely done through immigration law. There is overlap in other areas, including (and



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especially!) labor and employment law, family law, and criminal law. I hope to service immigrant communities in a variation of these fields, not limiting myself to solely immigration law services, but something more holistic, addressing multiple areas of need.

Thank you Justice at Work, Equal Justice America, and the Peggy Browning Fund for an incredible summer!