



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Greater Boston Legal Services

Update 1:

I have been working for almost a month now at Greater Boston Legal Services, with the CORI & Re-entry Project. This is my second legal internship as I embark on my third year of law school at Northeastern University School of Law. It has been an immensely rewarding experience to work directly with folks and support them in sealing their records so they can move forward with access to jobs, housing, and community involvement. I have learned so much from my team and feel very grateful to work alongside such knowledgeable, skilled, and passionate advocates. Yesterday I was able to represent someone for the first time ever in court, and we successfully got their record sealed.

Part of what has allowed me to do this work is funding from Equal Justice America. I am very excited and grateful to be an Equal Justice America Fellow, and one of my responsibilities is sharing updates about my work throughout the summer. If you support my work and similar opportunities, please consider donating to Equal Justice for America to support other advocates like me who want to use what we learn in law school to fight against systems of oppression such as mass incarceration, and support communities so they can thrive.

Update 2:

It is time for another update! I am enjoying my time at Greater Boston Legal Services, with the CORI & Re-entry Project. This is my second legal internship as I embark on my third year of law school at Northeastern University School of Law. This co-op has been a great experience to learn the aspects of law I want to pursue and what aspects are not for me. One thing we have been doing is lobbying for Massachusetts to pass laws that would allow automatic sealing of records upon eligibility, as well as a law that would require prisons to provide people with IDs within a month of leaving incarceration. Spending time in the state house, finding my representatives, and advocating for change on a local legislative level is a new experience for me. I find that it



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complements our direct service work very well, and I want advocacy to be a part of my legal career.

I have been able to gain this great experience because of Equal Justice America. I am very grateful to be an Equal Justice America Fellow. If you support my work and similar opportunities, please consider donating to Equal Justice for America to support other advocates like me who want to use what we learn in law school to fight against systems of oppression such as mass incarceration, and support communities so they can thrive.

Update 3:

Hello again good people of LinkedIn! It is time for my third update as an EJA Fellow.

I have been at Greater Boston Legal Services, with the CORI & Re-entry Project for almost two months. After this, I have one year left before graduating from Northeastern University School of Law. For this update, I want to talk about something we've been doing as a team at the CORI & Re-entry Project. The whole team has been reading *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, and meeting every week to discuss. We have been taking turns leading the discussion as well. This has been a great and unique aspect of my co-op. We have been able to accompany our day to day work with a larger understanding of the racist world we are working within. One of the topics that has come up is the ways that courts promote racism. One example that comes to mind is a court in Boston having glass cages for incarcerated people when the community it serves is majority Black and Latinx, whereas in white affluent areas the courts look very different-a lot nicer and no cages. It is very powerful to be able to process and understand the legal system whilst discussing this book together. At first, I was skeptical, given that in other legal experiences whenever there were activities dedicated to anything related to being critical about the systems we're working within, often given a catch-all term of "DEI", things were usually optional and felt not important to the organization or team as a whole. I am happy that my skepticism has been proved wrong, and I look forward to leading discussion next week for the first time.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for helping me have this experience. It is invaluable to me to be able to engage in critical thought and discussion as a team, and having this experience will allow me to do that more in the future. If you support my work and similar opportunities, please consider donating to Equal Justice for America to support other advocates like me who want to use what we learn in law school to fight against systems of oppression such as mass incarceration, and support communities so they can thrive.

Update 4:

Time flies! I come to you on this rainy afternoon with my fourth update as an EJA Fellow.

I have been at Greater Boston Legal Services, with the CORI & Re-entry Project for some time now. After this, I have one year left before graduating from Northeastern University School of Law. At this point in my co-op, I have been able to represent two people in court and get their records sealed. Having my own caseload and being able to represent clients in court has been a great experience. It has been valuable to me first because I've enjoyed



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it and second because it has shown me that this is something I would like to have in my legal career. The people aspect of this job can't be highlighted enough - I love interacting with people and being able to do something that genuinely impacts their life positively.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for helping me have this experience. As I look toward what I want to do after graduation, this is informing a lot of my considerations. If you support my work and similar opportunities, please consider donating to Equal Justice for America to support other advocates like me who want to use what we learn in law school to fight against systems of oppression such as mass incarceration, and support communities so they can thrive.

Update 5:

All good things must come to an end. This is my final update as an EJA Fellow.

It has been a wonderful summer doing my co-op at Greater Boston Legal Services, with the CORI & Re-entry Project. Now, I have one year left before graduating from Northeastern University School of Law. I have been reflecting on the lessons this co-op has brought me. I have successfully represented three people in court in front of a judge, resulting in those people having their records sealed. They can now continue to move on with their life, without their past trailing behind them. It is what everyone deserves.

During these days that we have the hearings on the petitions to seal, we wait in the courtroom while other matters are decided by the judge: restraining orders, bail, and more. One lesson I have seen is that there are some limited ways in which addressing something in court can have a positive impact on someone's life. For example, sealing criminal records – it is straightforward: people with nonconvictions on their records can go in front of a judge and ask for it to be sealed and the judge can consider all the circumstances and make a decision that can help that person. The judge can also decide against sealing. And just like that, they become yet another barrier that people are facing in their attempt to live a good life. This was a lesson for me because I do not have faith in the law – the law has and does allow terrible things to happen every day. I want to be a lawyer because with those skills I can contribute some good to the world. It was an important lesson seeing how the law can facilitate me in that endeavor.

I am very grateful to Equal Justice America for helping me have this experience. I have been able to lobby at the state house for better laws, learn with my colleagues how to be antiracist, help clients seal their records both through the administrative mail-in process and in court, and more. If you have been supporting my work and following along, thank you. To support similar future work, please consider donating to Equal Justice for America to support other advocates like me.