

August 11, 2015

Dan Ruben, Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you very much for allowing me to participate in the Equal Justice America Summer 2015 Fellowship. I completed a ten-week internship at the Immigration Unit of Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS).

BDS represents low-income and indigent clients, and most of the Immigration Unit's clients are detained. Many of these clients suffer from mental illness and have a wide variety of immigration statuses; some are undocumented while others have been Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) for many years. All of them are at risk of deportation.

One of the cases that I spent a great deal of time on involved a young, mentally ill woman from El Salvador who has been in detention since 2014. El Salvador has a culture of machismo and is plagued by widespread gender violence perpetrated by men and exacerbated by rampant gang violence. In her home country, this client was the victim of repeated and severe sexual abuse and domestic violence at the hands of family members and her common law spouse, who has strong gang affiliations. She fled her spouse by coming to the U.S., and he eventually was able to come to the U.S., find her, and resume his sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. The client fears she would be severely harmed or killed by her partner or his gang affiliates if she were deported to El Salvador. She also would be unable to receive the mental health treatment and psychotropic medication that she needs. I worked closely with the attorney on preparing every aspect of this case, including sorting out a messy and convoluted case history, meeting with the client and drafting an affidavit, and writing the asylum brief. I will attend the client's individual hearing later this month.

I also worked on cases involving a cognitively impaired former gang member from Mexico, a mentally ill and long-time LPR woman from the Dominican Republic, and a man who had grown up as an LPR in New York, but became involved with the criminal justice system due to substance abuse. Most of these cases involved appeals and/or written case preparation that improved my research and legal writing skills.

Prior to this internship, I was dedicated to working in the public interest field in general, and in immigration law, in particular. I am now further interested in working with detained individuals and in addressing widespread injustices within the immigration detention system. Thank you again to EJA for giving me this opportunity.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frances Hartmann  
JD Candidate 2017  
New York University School of Law



August 27, 2015

Dan Ruben, Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

**Re: Frances Hartmann EJA Fellow Evaluation Summer 2015**

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing this fellowship evaluation for Frances (Fran) Hartmann. Fran was an EJA fellow with Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS) in the Immigration Practice this summer 2015 for ten weeks. BDS is one of the largest public defense providers in the United States. We represent more than 43,000 clients per year in a variety of legal proceedings in New York City, primarily indigent criminal, family, and immigration defense.

Throughout the summer Fran worked with staff attorneys from all three of our focus areas in the Immigration Practice: Padilla, Youth and the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP). The focus of the Padilla team is to advise noncitizen clients of the immigration consequences of their criminal cases. Attorneys work in close collaboration with BDS defenders to avoid or minimize the negative immigration consequences of their noncitizens' criminal cases. The Immigrant Youth Project provides a full range of immigration legal services to our young immigrant clients. Finally, NYIFUP is a first-in-nation program that provides legal representation for indigent New Yorkers in detained removal proceedings at the Varick Street Immigration Court. NYIFUP Immigration Practice attorneys provide ongoing representation to clients facing immigration detention and deportation on a wide array of applications and other creative advocacy efforts.

The bulk of Fran's assignments were under the supervision of staff attorneys from the NYIFUP practice. She conducted extensive in-depth case law research and country conditions research for asylum applications. For example, she researched the country conditions of the Dominican Republic as pertaining to the treatment of mentally ill individuals. She also conducted research into cutting-edge legal arguments such as whether a client who is a Lawful Permanent Resident is eligible to apply for a U-Visa. Fran wrote a motion to terminate on a complicated issue at the intersection of criminal-immigration law specifically related to the charge of a crime as an Aggravated Felony. She also drafted an appeal brief to the Board of Immigration Appeals on a complicated asylum legal issue.

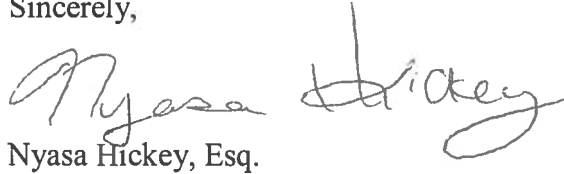
Fran also had an opportunity to directly engage with clients and clients' family members. She wrote a parole request for a client in immigration custody. She worked with family members to

draft affidavits in support of an asylum claim. Finally, she conducted an intake and assessment of a client facing criminal charges with an attorney in our “Padilla” team.

Fran had in-depth prior immigration experience she brought to the summer internship. She clearly cares a lot about the issues related to our practice. She is a fast worker, an effective writer and thorough researcher. She required little instruction and produced quality work. Specifically, her writing was very good with only minor edits required by staff attorneys and she was receptive to feedback.

We were grateful to have Fran join us and contribute to the mission of our Immigration Practice for the summer. Thank you for helping to support her and the work of Brooklyn Defender Services. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at (718) 254-0700 x 230 or at [nhickey@bds.org](mailto:nhickey@bds.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nyasa Hickey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nyasa" and last name "Hickey" clearly distinguishable.

Nyasa Hickey, Esq.