

Equal Justice America
Fellowship Report
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Xiaoyu Duan
New York Legal Assistance Group
7 Hanover Square 18th floor
New York, NY 10004
(212) 613-5000
info@nylag.org
Managing Attorney: Fulvia Vargas-De Leon
FVargas@nylag.org

Through my Equal Justice America fellowship, I am working at the Mobile Legal Help Center of New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG). NYLAG provides free civil legal services to low-income individuals in New York. Mobile Legal Help Center is one of its initiatives to physically bring legal services to remote communities in New York City. As one of the two legal interns at Mobile Legal Help Center, I spent around 60% of my time working in NYLAG's financial district headquarter, 30% of my time on the road with our mobile help center, and the rest I spent going to several courts across the New York City with NYLAG's staff attorneys and shadowing their court appearances.

During my summer internship, I drafted a variety of legal documents, including Order of Protection petitions, affidavits in support of Battered Spouse Waiver, Orders to Show Cause, correspondence with opposing counsel, advocacy letters to HRA, etc. I was also able to conduct legal researches on relevant issues as our cases progressed. In the process of helping my clients, I have been able to hone my oral and written advocacy skills. New York Legal Assistance Group has provided me with training

and support I need to become an effective advocate, as I learned a lot on many state law issues that were not covered in our first year law school curriculum, such as the city's rent stabilization practices and various public assistance programs.

I gained substantial experience working directly with clients as well: I conducted intake interviews with clients on Mobile Legal Help Center's van, called clients for further information, assisted staff attorneys in client meetings and served as Spanish interpreter. By interacting with our clients, I was able to witness the impact of laws and policy on real people and gained a deeper understanding of what they mean.

Working with the staff attorneys at New York Legal Assistance Group has given me great insights into the life and work of a public interest attorney. They have given me very helpful feedbacks and guidance as to the next steps to take. By receiving Equal Justice America's fellowship and working for NYLAG's Mobile Legal Help Center this summer, I not only gained valuable experience but also had a clearer vision for the future. I plan to take relevant courses and participate in clinics for the next academic year and continue my journey towards becoming a public interest lawyer.

To: Equal Justice Executive Director
Dan Ruben

SUPERVISOR EVALUATION - INTERN/VOLUNTEER

YOUR NAME: Fulvia Vargas-De Leon

INTERN'S NAME: Xiaoyu Duan

1. Please describe the projects assigned to your intern/volunteer.

During her summer at the New York Legal Assistance Group Xiaoyu worked on housing court petition for tenants facing evictions in New York City. She also researched complex legal issues relating to family and employment law matters.

2. Did the intern/volunteer's work product and overall performance meet your expectations?

Xiaoyu was committed to both our work and understanding the needs of our clients. She was diligent with all assignment and continuously checked in to make sure deadlines were met. Our team noted Xiaoyu was extremely patient and sensitive to the needs of our clients and always took the extra step to ensure we could assist as much as possible.

3. Please describe any concerns you have regarding their work product or performance.
None.

4. What were your overall impressions of this intern/volunteer?

I was truly impressed with Xiaoyu's maturity and understanding of poverty law. It is a difficult line at work but she quickly adapted to the crisis mode that is often associated with this job. Whether meeting clients at our legal clinic sites or speaking to clients over the phone, she always carried herself professionally and with an understanding of the sensitivity of the issues at hand. Xiaoyu will make an excellent attorney in any area of law.