

Summer 2018 EJA Fellow



Name: Makenzie Way

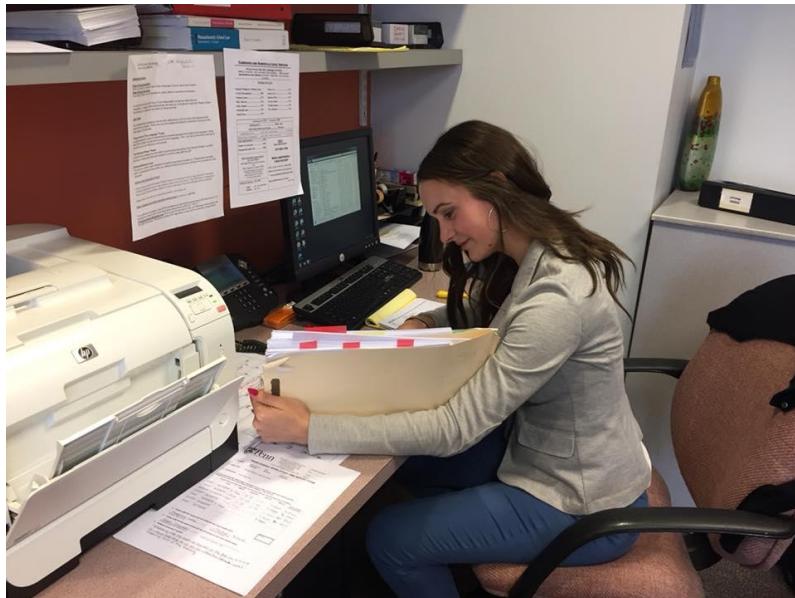
Law School: University of Pennsylvania Law

EJA Fellowship: Greater Boston Legal Services

Entry 1: June 15, 2018

In a few short hours I'll be home for the weekend celebrating Father's Day with my lovely dad, but first my [#EJAfellowupdate](#) ! As some of you know I was generously selected as one of this year's [Equal Justice America](#) Fellows, and am currently working out of Boston with Greater Boston Legal Services. at this point I'm officially one month into my summer internship where I've primarily been working on housing and benefits matters, and honestly, I'm loving it! Somehow I'm managing a caseload of 15+ cases, while attending training, advocacy events, and housing court - photo of me buried in medical files pictured below. And while the experience I'm getting is amazing, the impact that my work has on clients is even more outstanding!

[Penn Law](#)



Entry 2: June 26, 2018

My second #EJAfellowupdate is one that I'm especially proud of! Last week a previous client of Greater Boston Legal Services called my supervising attorney to ask if we could help her apply for emergency housing. The client is a victim of domestic violence and desperately needed help getting out of her unsafe housing situation. As lawyers our job description doesn't encompass housing searches but my supervising attorney asked if I'd be open to helping - of course I said yes immediately. While filling out housing applications may not be the most "lawyer like" task I've done this summer, or the most exciting or demanding, it was one of the most rewarding. At the end of the 2 hour meeting the client was in tears thanking me for all I had done - she explained that for her, having these applications properly filled out and submitted was a matter of life and death. (See attached photo of me closing her case!)



Entry 3: July 14, 2018

Last week I said goodbye to my legal internship (and said hello to Greece). Now, for my second to last [#EJAFellowUpdate](#) I'd like to look back at what I loved, and what I'll take away from the experience.

Entering this summer I had my doubts - what if I wasn't good enough? What if my supervising attorney hated me? What if I really screwed something up and negatively impacted a client? Thankfully all of those worries were put to rest almost immediately after starting my summer job. I LOVED the team I was working with, everyone was so dedicated and had their own unique interest that when combined created a real powerhouse. But most of all I loved the work I was doing. I loved seeing the positive impact that our efforts could have, whether it was helping a mother avoid homelessness, or a disabled man appeal a benefits denial. Sometimes the work consisted of simply sending a few targeted emails and entering a settlement or negotiation plan, other times it involved litigation or researching and presenting an argument before a council; either way it contributed to not only my legal skills, but also my overall advocacy skills.

Though I'm sad my fellowship/internship has come to an end I will take the knowledge I've gained with - for instance, how to draft an email that is concise, legally accurate and in your clients interest; how to calm a client down in your office and/or how to get crucial information from a trauma victim without furthering the trauma; and how to advocate zealously for a client while maintaining relations with the opposition.

This summer has been truly amazing, I cannot thank Greater Boston Legal Services and [Equal Justice America](#) enough for providing me with the opportunity!

Entry 4: July 23, 2018

It's officially time for my last [#EJAFellowUpdate](#) and for once I'm going to keep it short and simple. I could not have asked for a better summer internship to finish off my first year of law school. Not only did I learn an excessive amount in a short period of time, my respect for the people who do this work also deepened tenfold.

I'm beyond grateful for everything [Equal Justice America](#) did to make this summer possible for me, and for the knowledge that from here on out I will remain part of the Equal Justice America Fellowship network!



August 7, 2018

Equal Justice America

RE: Makenzie Way – EJA Summer internship

To whom it may concern:

I am extremely pleased to write this evaluation/letter of recommendation regarding McKenzie Way who served as a full time student intern under my direct supervision from May, 2018 through July, 2018.

McKenzie represented low income individuals in housing and public benefits matters. McKenzie came to this office with incredible enthusiasm. She immediately bonded with her clients and was able to work independently from the start of her internship. She also knew when to ask for guidance and she used supervision extremely well repeatedly revising her written work until fully satisfied with the results.

McKenzie was highly successful in her advocacy work. For example, she helped multiple clients get benefits restored or increased and she assisted a housing tenant who was being evicted for no-fault reasons to obtain and transition into affordable housing. McKenzie successfully appealed a decision denying her client financial eligibility for an affordable homeownership unit for which she had been selected by lottery. McKenzie successfully challenged a determination initially made by HUD regarding how her client's income had been counted. This required both legal and factual research which she performed flawlessly. The client is now being afforded the next available affordable homeownership unit of the appropriate size that becomes available. McKenzie also had the opportunity to do in depth analysis of a claim against her client for over \$16,000 in back rent. She was able to identify procedural errors made by the landlord that presented a strong argument for elimination of a large portion of this debt.

Overall I was extremely impressed with McKenzie's work ethic and her level of effectiveness. She is compassionate, hard-working, highly intelligent and committed to working on behalf of vulnerable populations. I think she learned a lot during her time here and she fit into our office seamlessly. She was an absolute pleasure to work with and I know she will be an

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excellent attorney. Any legal office will be very lucky to have someone with her skills and demeanor. I am very grateful to EJA for helping McKenzie to work on behalf of our clients this summer.

Please feel free to contact me at ejshachter@gmail.com if you should have any additional questions as I am transitioning to new employment.

Sincerely,

Ellen Shachter
Senior Attorney