



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Amanda Schwartz

Law School: Boston University School of Law

Fellowship: Greater Boston Legal Services

Entry 1: June 18th, 2019

This week I started my internship as a Legal Intern at Greater Boston Legal Services. Because funding for pro bono civil legal aid is extremely limited, I am dependent upon my Equal Justice America Fellowship to help me afford to be able to do this important work. I work primarily with survivors of domestic abuse on family and immigration cases. My first court appearance is coming up next month, where I'll be representing an undocumented immigrant as she files for divorce from her abusive husband. Unfortunately, the Trump administration's executive discretion over federal immigration law has made life here even more untenable for undocumented immigrants. We're noticing trends of undocumented immigrants staying in abusive situations (whether it be a domestic violence situation or the case of employers stealing their wages) out of fear that asking for help will put them on the government's radar and lead to deportation. By helping to fund the next class of EJA fellows, you are supporting law students who can help provide emotional and legal support to those in need of civil legal aid.

Entry 2: June 28, 2019

These past two weeks I've been helping one of our undocumented clients file her VAWA petition. Because she was married to a US Citizen who physically and emotionally abused her throughout their relationship, she is eligible under the Violence Against Women Act for a green card. It will be a long wait to get her petition processed, but we're hopeful for a positive result in the end.



Entry 3: July 15, 2019

This past week I had my first court appearance. The judge approved my motion and I was thrilled to see my client so relieved. She is currently trying to find permanent residence for herself and her two children, as they are now residing at a shelter for survivors of domestic abuse. Although she has a long road of battles ahead, it was extremely rewarding to help her secure her rightful share of her ex-husband's annuity. My work at GBLS is made possible by the EJA Fellowship.

Entry 4: July 30, 2019

This is my final update! These past two weeks have been super hectic at GBLS. I had my second court appearance this past week, and we were successful in keeping the mother's abuser from getting shared custody of their children. I've learned so much this summer - especially that survivors of domestic abuse come from all walks of life and they stay silent far too often. Undocumented survivors of domestic abuse are particularly susceptible to underreporting, due to a fear of them or even their abuser (whose income they often depend on) getting deported. One of the most important things people can do is advocate for laws like the Safe Communities Act (Bill S. 1401). It bars police, court officers and jail officials from notifying ICE that someone is about to be released as well as barring law enforcement and court personnel from asking people about their status unless required by law. Reach out to your Massachusetts representatives and ask for their support!