



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Anna Perina

**Law School:** Boston University Law

**Fellowship:** CAIR Coalition

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### Entry 1:

Hello everyone! Thanks to the support of the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I am spending the summer as a legal intern at the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition in D.C. I'm working with the Detained Children's team, which provides legal services to unaccompanied immigrant children (UAC) detained in facilities across the D.C./Maryland/Virginia (DMV) region. I've spent the beginning of my internship observing, listening to, and learning from staff and clients about the challenges facing unaccompanied immigrant children both in the U.S. and in their home countries, and the forms of legal relief available to them. On Thursday, I'll be helping provide legal information and conduct new-client intakes in a children's shelter in Virginia, where I'll get to meet future clients and listen to their stories. It's only been two weeks, but I'm already completely awestruck by the resilience and courage of the kids we work with, and by the compassion and commitment of the CAIR attorneys and staff supporting them.

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### Entry 2:

I'm working this summer as an Equal Justice America legal fellow at the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights (CAIR) Coalition in D.C. I'm on the Detained Children's Team, which provides legal representation & support to unaccompanied minor children detained (or formerly detained) in the D.C. area.

Here at CAIRCo, we have our work cut out for us as legal service providers to many of the vulnerable undocumented migrant children who have just arrived in the U.S (you've likely read about similar stories recently in the news). So far, I've split my time between longer-term direct representation cases, and more immediate detention work. We strive to ensure these kids are safe and healthy while in ORR custody, help them



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reunify with family members ASAP, and figure out the best form of legal relief so they can stay in the country safely. There is so much more for me to do and learn here, and I'm sad to think this experience will be over in 5 weeks.

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### **Entry 3:**

I've turned the corner to the last stretch of my internship and can't believe this rich experience is almost over! It's a bit unsettling to think I'll abruptly be stopping my caseload and client visits at a time when demand for legal services is only increasing. Someone recently asked me what the "rose" and the "thorn" of my internship is, and the answer is really one and the same: I've absolutely loved getting to know and advocate for all the kiddos I've met either in detention or released, but I also understand more seriously now the legal hurdles they face in order to have a safe and semi-normal future. Also, it's no joke that legal aid work really puts my life in perspective: the best case scenario for most of the kids I work (i.e., getting placed with a foster family or in a long term residential facility) with would probably be considered the worst case scenario for an American kid of the same age. And yet, despite their grim realities, these kids persevere. I'm thankful to have been a small part of that fight!