



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Emily Center

Law School: Boston University School of Law

Fellowship: Community Action Program Legal Services

Entry 1:

Over the past few weeks I have been jumping right into legal research at Community Action Program Legal Services (CAPLAW). I am researching various areas of employment law for consultations with the Community Action Agencies that CAPLAW serves. Other research goes into developing online resources for CAPLAW's Community Action Agency clients to utilize, as they strive to revitalize and empower low-income communities. In just my first week, I listened in on a consultation call with a Community Action Agency that had questions about an employee who was missing work and having mental health issues. I drafted an email giving the agency the resources it would need about Family Medical Leave Act and accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as drug testing policies. I also participated in training on the legal aspects of cloud computing, and began drafting an article for CAPLAW's e-bulletin to help Community Action Agencies understand the cloud, as well as understand if cloud computing is right for their agency and how to best utilize it. I am extremely grateful for the hands-on experiences I have been able to see through already in my time at CAPLAW, and above all else, I am happy to be working with a group of kind and engaging attorneys who care deeply about the impactful work they are doing. Thank you to Equal Justice America for funding my experience at CAPLAW.

Entry 2:

My work with CAPLAW recently has surrounded the CAPLAW annual conference, at which Community Action Agencies can learn how to better serve their communities and comply with the laws and regulations surrounding their work. In the week leading up to the conference, I helped prepare materials for sessions, such as putting together an informational sheet about the different entities a Community Action Agency can form if



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they wish to create a subsidiary for-profit entity, in order to move away from unrelated business income tax, and instead have the separate subsidiary entity taxed. In this way, a private Community Action Agency can also preserve their status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. This information was utilized by presenters at the conference who conducted a Shark Tank inspired session in which various Community Action Agencies pitched their subsidiary business ideas to a panel. At the conference, the entire CAPLAW team was busy meeting all of the people we email and correspond with every day, in person. We all traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina, for the week and for three days of packed sessions. It was the largest CAPLAW conference yet, with over 800 attendees. I was a monitor for many of the sessions, and thus spoke at the beginning about housekeeping items, after which I was able to take in the presentations. The presentations I took the most out of involved Hot Topics in Employment Law, and the Public Charge Threat on immigration law. I met with many engaged and dedicated attorneys, board members, and Community Action Agency leaders in the week and thoroughly enjoyed my time in Charleston getting to know the CAPLAW team. Thank you again to Equal Justice America for giving me this opportunity to learn and grow in the legal field, and alongside those who are dedicated to making the world a better place for the underserved populations in our country.

Entry 3:

As I come into my second half of the summer with CAPLAW, I am beginning to understand the framework of Community Action as well as the legal issues most prominent in the Community Action network. Over the past few weeks I have continued my research on various consultations when Community Action Agencies reach out to CAPLAW for legal expertise. I now have the chance to not only research these issues, but also speak with representatives of the Community Action Agencies over the phone to relay my research results and advise on possible solutions. I have spoken with clients on how to increase executive compensation while remaining in compliance with various federal grant regulations, I have relayed information on how to identify and handle possible financial conflicts of interest on the board of directors, and I have advised a Community Action Agency on their decision not to pay out accrued leave upon employee termination. Most recently, I spoke with a client about volunteers their agency was hoping to bring on their team and advised them on what unpaid volunteers can and cannot contribute to their organization. Once the Community Action Agency informed us that they would instead like to use volunteers from a job training program, I followed up with an email discussing interns/trainees under the Fair Labor Standards Act. I have very much enjoyed coming into more direct contact with Community Action Agencies and their passionate and dedicated employees and board members. I am extremely grateful to CAPLAW for mentoring me through this process, and my coworkers for being present on calls to help me navigate discussions. I am equally thankful to Equal Justice America for allowing me to have this opportunity.



Entry 4:

#EJAFellowUpdate As my legal internship with CAPLAW is coming to a close, I am extremely grateful to the staff at CAPLAW for training me and allowing me to contribute real work to their organization. Towards the end of my internship, I have been able to lead phone calls with clients, advising them on everything from paying out accrued leave upon termination, to the allowability of lunch costs for federal grant funds, to how to handle an incident of bed bugs in the workplace. I have also drafted all of the articles that will be sent out to all CAAs in CAPLAW's August e-bulletin. This drafting process began when I first started my summer at CAPLAW, and has continued through my internship, which has allowed me to receive thoughtful and meaningful feedback on my research and writing skills. Most importantly, I have had the opportunity to get to know the amazing staff here at CAPLAW, who have gone beyond helping me with my legal skills, and also have helped me navigate the job search, and more. Thank you to both CAPLAW and Equal Justice America for this fantastic opportunity, which has sparked a real interest in nonprofit and charitable organizations that I will now be continuing to grow throughout my time at Boston University School of Law.