



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:

**Name:** Michelle Nguyen

**Law School:** University of Texas School of Law

**Organization:** Texas Appleseed

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**Update 1:** My first few weeks at Texas Appleseed have been great. I've been able to combine my interests of educational equity and legal advocacy into one role. Through my work researching restorative justice practices as a method to combatting the school-to-prison pipeline, I have seen how my future in the legal career can be utilized to advocating for equitable education for all students. I have learned so much from my supervisor, the rest of the Appleseed team, and from my fellow interns. I'm excited to see how the rest of the summer goes.

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**Update 2:** As I reflect on my first full month in my internship at Texas Appleseed, I realized that I have learned so much in all the opportunities that have been presented to me. Whether it was taking day trips to visit other collaborating non-profits or getting a chance to really dive into legal research on a topic I'm interested in, I have never felt bored in my work and am grateful to be in a space that allows interns to partake in meaningful work.

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**Update 3:** Since my last EJA update, I have been diving deep into legal research on the school-to-prison pipeline and how school policies affect marginalized students in the classroom. I have gotten to attend "Know Your Rights" trainings for students, talked to concerned parents about their student's interactions with the criminal justice system while on school grounds, and read countless articles about restorative justice programs and how schools have seen positive changes on their campuses after instituting these progressive disciplinary processes. I am grateful that I am in a role that intertwines new information with a field I am fairly familiar with - I have learned so much more by being able to combine new knowledge with an area of information I feel comfortable with already.

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**Update 4:** As I wrap up my internship and reflect on this summer, I know that I have learned so much. I have spent full days sitting in on hearings at the capitol, attending trainings for local community members to know their rights in various situations, and connected with attorneys and community organizers across various states. Working with Appleseed has been an incredible opportunity to learn more about my local community and how that work can spread out into cultivating widespread change. The highlight of my summer so far has definitely been getting to know new law and policy students in the area who are passionate about the same work that I am and getting to build foundations for continuing our work into the school year.



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**Update 5:** After finishing my internship at Texas Appleseed and reflecting on how the internship affected my legal career, I realized how grateful I am for both Texas Appleseed and Equal Justice America. I chose to come to law school because I wanted to pursue public interest, but the financial burdens of law school and higher education made it daunting to make that commitment. With the help of organizations like Equal Justice America, and with the experiences at organizations like Texas Appleseed, I have seen the value of pursuing public interest and the opportunities there are to find funding to be able to make these choices without feeling the financial strains of law school as deeply.