



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Latin American Association

Update 1: Today I crossed 100 hours served at my summer internship at Latin American Association! I've been hard at work advocating for clients and helping them navigate the complicated legal structure that is our immigration system. This public interest work that I and many of my fellow law students do is often under- or unpaid labor, due to financial constraints on host organizations. This discourages law students from dedicating their knowledge and skills to where they can have the most impact. Thankfully, due to the support of Equal Justice America and Emory University School of Law's Public Interest Committee, I'm able to work full-time at no cost to the LAA, gaining valuable experience in this field.

Update 2: I crossed the 200 hours served threshold earlier this week at Latin American Association and that means it's time for another #ejafellowupdate! Today's post, though, isn't going to be about the work I'm doing at the LAA. Instead, it's about the latitude I'm given at the LAA to set my own schedule and be responsible for my own work. My manager, Cynthia, treats me the way any manager should - as an adult who can manage my own time. This weekend, I took Friday and Tuesday off so I could travel to St. Louis and visit my family (my parents are celebrating their 39th wedding anniversary) and it wouldn't have been possible without Cynthia's support so I could still meet my hourly goals of service. To my fellow law students: one of the benefits of public interest law is flexibility - to set your hours, decide how to balance work and leisure, and help to build community on your own terms. Small shout-out too to Equal Justice America for helping to fund my summer internship at the LAA. Without their support I a.) wouldn't have been able to serve at the LAA and b.) wouldn't have been able to afford the gas to and from St. Louis (yikes!).

Update 3: This week, I've served 250 hours at the Latin American Association, and today's #EJAFellowUpdate is all about experience. Going into my summer position, I had 11 years of work experience, mostly in fundraising. But I also knew I had zero years of work experience in a legal role. This summer, working with the amazing staff in the immigration department, I've seen connections between my past work and the work I hope to do in the future. I've helped conduct intake interviews, updated clients about the status of their cases, and



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even had the privilege to notify clients that their cases had been approved. All of that has been thanks to the support and trust of Cynthia, my manager.

Update 4: We're heading into the last few weeks of my internship with Latin American Association, and that means it's time for another #ejafellowupdate! Today I want to talk about seeing larger connections between this summer's work and other aspects of public interest law. At the LAA, I've been doing direct client work, which makes a tangible difference in each client's life, but it doesn't do anything to change the structures under which all of our clients are living. I help clients complete their paperwork and submit it, and while it does make their lives better, because they can live where they want (which on a basic level, should be a right), it doesn't make the process for others easier. That said, there's also incredible public service work that does impact on a policy level, and one of the ways that happens is through the notice-and-comment rulemaking for administrative regulations. One of those regulations available for comment right now is on clarification of Title IX sex discrimination, to bring administrative regulations in line with the decision in *Bostock*, by recognizing that transgender and LGBTQIA+ people are subject to sex discrimination when they are discriminated against (here's a link to the proposed rule change: <https://lnkd.in/gb3PsCYv>) Anyone can comment on the proposed rules, and organizations like Know Your IX organize people to submit comments that will be taken seriously by those who read the comments. Thanks to their advocacy, I submitted a comment in favor of the proposed rules, and I'm working with other affinity groups to submit favorable comments. I am so grateful to Emory University School of Law, Equal Justice America, and EPIC for making this summer possible.

Update 5: Today is my final EJA Fellow Update. I had an amazing summer working at the Latin American Association's immigration department, learning from some of the smartest and hardest-working people I know about all the complexities of our immigration system. I worked directly with clients, prepared documents for their applications, submitted FOIA requests, drafted cover letters, and in some very exciting moments, got to notify clients that their applications had been approved. I learned a lot about immigration work, which I'm excited to continue both through my externship and classwork this fall, but above all else, it solidified my belief that everyone in this world should have the right to live where they want without encumbrance. I am so grateful for Equal Justice America and their support which made this possible. If you'd like to make this opportunity possible for others, you can donate to their work.