



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:

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**Law School:** Loyola University Chicago School of Law

**Organization:** Health Justice Clinic at Loyola University Chicago

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**Update 1:** I began working as a Summer Fellow at the Health Justice Project Clinic at Loyola University Chicago School of Law on May 23. Full of excitement and nerves I entered the clinic with the intention to become a better attorney. I vividly recall receiving four cases and being told that I will be in charge of them in their entirety. Immediately I sped home to review the case files and get familiar with my clients. In the following days I reached out to my clients and introduced myself. In the following week I was leading an IEP meeting advocating for my client's needs and accommodations.

Every day I feel my confidence building. I feel comfortable working in this position and I am learning to feel comfortable with doing uncomfortable tasks. It's a very unique experience trying to apply what I learned during my 1L year because now I have to also learn how to "lawyer." Communicating with my clients can be a challenge because you do not want to sound robotic when discussing their case. Although I have learned a lot in the past four weeks, there is plenty to learn and look forward to in the future.

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**Update 2:** As I am officially midway into my internship, I feel comfortable working with and for my clients. Although some days may feel slow and some extremely quick, I feel that everyday feels rewarding. There is always something that I can be working on to benefit my client. I am learning more about what I am passionate about as well as learning my strengths and weaknesses.

It brings my joy to hear that my clients are satisfied with my effort. I am in constant contact with them daily, but it did take time for them to trust me. Building trust with someone over the phone that you have never met is extremely challenging, especially when the person you are trying to work with does not feel comfortable telling you their personal story. I can say now that I have a strong foundation for my client relationships. I have one client who calls me daily and it makes me the happiest student-attorney to hear her chuckle. This first-hand experience has given me a chance to explore my next avenue as an attorney. I know what I like and don't like, and I am using that knowledge to my advantage. I admire the passion that my co-workers have for providing the best service to our clients. It's motivating to work with people who care, and better yet, who are not motivated by the money to help people. Working in the Health Justice Clinic has shown me a side of the law that is rarely seen by most. The one thing I will cherish about this experience is the fact that my team is extremely supportive, understanding, and caring. The tedious nature of this field requires an endless supply of caffeine and dedication.



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**Update 3:** As I enter the final weeks as a student attorney for the Health Justice Project Clinic, I feel that I am more confident in my ability to address the legal needs of my clients. I have finally been able to get my foot in the door and work on a multitude of cases ranging from Immigration, Disability, Medicaid, and Special Education/Learning Disabilities. It's honestly a privilege to be in this position to assist people with the quality of their life and to see the fruits of my labor for my client is one of the most fulfilling feelings. Witnessing my client's appreciation and building their trust to give me the opportunity to assist them in their vulnerable moments. I am proud to make myself available for them at any time. I have been in communication with the supervising attorneys at the clinic and they are allowing me to volunteer and assist on the cases after my last day. Being able to be a part of the process after my "end-date" gives me hope that my client's needs will be addressed and they can move on with their lives knowing they received the best legal aid assistance.

Everyday I am learning what it means to be an attorney on my own terms and envisioning my future self after I passed the California Bar. The day appears distant, but in reality it is closer than I suspect. I am thrilled to practice on a larger scale in the future and am especially excited to see what my future beholds. I am grateful for the guidance from everyone I have met or worked with since beginning law school.

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**Update 4:** The days are coming to an end as a legal fellow at the clinic. I learned the ins and outs of working at a legal aid clinic. The supervising attorneys gave me the autonomy to work on these cases under my own discretion. Although I needed their approval to move forward, I was able to interpret the situation and reflect on what is needed for my client. I even had to rent a car to drive to my client 45 minutes away and bring them to get their fingerprinting done in Downtown Chicago because she was unable to drive. Going out of my way to support my clients proves that our legal services are needed for underrepresented individuals. Whether you are a minority or elder or even simply need help, legal aid clinics will expend all of their resources to support the clients. This experience has taught me to become more personable with clients and taught me to listen before speaking with them. I may have an agenda of my own to help them, but at the end of the day, I need to support my clients and address their legal needs.

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**Update 5:** I finished up my legal fellowship at the clinic. It's been a privilege to work with clients who are respectful and cooperative. There were some instances where clients may have been unresponsive, but I found ways to push forth with their agenda. I learned that there will be days that do not feel successful, but that is part of the process.

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