



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Children's Legal Center Chicago

Update 1: As I complete the third week of my legal internship, I wanted to share my first #EJAFellowUpdate. I have been selected as one of the 2022 Equal Justice America Fellows. Equal Justice America generously provides fellowships for law students working in public interest law. I was fortunate enough to learn about this fellowship from Mary Bird after accepting my internship with the @Children's Legal Center Chicago (CLC). CLC is a non-profit organization that provides free immigration services to children and their families. Currently, I am helping with asylum and domestic violence (U-Visa) cases.

Working on real cases has been different from the discussions I had in classes on the topic of immigration. Although the classroom helped me think about immigration from various perspectives, those discussions were, generally, more cursory and theoretical. Now, working to help real people, reading individual case files of peoples' tragic stories, and understanding the fear many immigrants face, those issues feel more personal. So far, I have learned that immigration law is challenging yet rewarding. I am grateful to do the work I set out to do when I applied to Loyola University Chicago School of Law. I am excited about what I will learn these next few weeks.

Update 2: As I complete one month of interning at the Children's Legal Center (CLC), it is time for an EJA Fellow Update. As a law student considering working in public interest law, it is notoriously difficult to obtain funding for such work. Fortunately, I have been selected as one of the 2022 Equal Justice America Fellows. Equal Justice America generously provides fellowships for law students working in public interest. At CLC, I have been familiarizing myself with the intricacies of the U-Visa applications. From obtaining police reports to drafting different immigration forms, I am learning that it is a meticulous process. Working on such applications requires attention to detail and patience. I am also working on asylum cases. Particularly, I am drafting a pre-hearing statement and gathering all the evidence that strengthens the client's case, along with the conditions of a client's country of origin, witness list, etcetera. Further, the consequences from unfavorable



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outcomes can be seriously harmful for our clients. Thus, I try each day to conduct the best research and produce my best work to support our clients.

In just a month, interning at CLC has provided me with some valuable lessons, friendship, and hands-on experience, which I am grateful for. I am excited to learn more and make the most of this wonderful opportunity. Additionally, the funding provided by EqualJusticeAmerica has alleviated the financial pressure for the summer as well.

Update 3: It is time for my next EJA Fellow Update. As I have mentioned previously, I was fortunate enough to receive funding from Equal Justice America this summer. I am currently interning at the Children's Legal Center Chicago (CLC) a nonprofit organization that provides free immigration services to children and their families.

For the past two weeks, I have been working on U visa cases. The U nonimmigrant status is set aside for victims of certain crimes (occurring in the United States) who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement or government officials in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. Since the clients are victims of crimes, the reports can be really heartbreaking and overwhelming. From time to time, I have to remind myself to pause and take a deep breath when I read through the clients' stories. It is difficult, but rewarding work and I'm grateful to be able to help in a small way.

Interning at CLC so far has been fruitful. I have been learning so much about immigration law and its intricacies. Thank you to Equal Justice America for allowing me to intern at CLC with a lesser financial burden.

Update 4: As I complete my second last week of internship at the Children's Legal Center Chicago, (CLC) it is time for my fourth EJA Fellow Update. The past week at CLC was particularly meaningful because I conducted my first intake, which was significant in itself, but also my first intake as a translator. My colleagues were looking for a person who speaks Hindi as they did not know that I do. I told them that I am fluent in Hindi and would love to help out with the intake. They trained me for it and later that day, I conducted my first intake in Hindi.

It was a remarkable experience for me to actually connect with the client whose case I will be helping with moving forward. Additionally, it was great to see the comfort on the client's face when they were told that CLC has a Hindi translator and that it is me. The clients were telling me how it would be easier for them to tell their story now that they do not have that communication barrier to deal with. It was an hour long intake and it went smoothly. I am now looking forward to helping with client's cases in the capacity of a translator.

I am learning so much as the weeks progress and it has been a rewarding experience. Thank you to Equal Justice America for helping with my financial burden as I learn more and more about immigration law.



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Update 5: As I start my second year of law school at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, it is time for my final EJA Fellow Update. It has been an incredible summer interning at the Children's Legal Center Chicago. I think for a short amount of time that I was interning, I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge regarding immigration law, its nuances, and the community Children's Legal Center Chicago serves. I started by helping with asylum cases. I gathered evidence for clients' asylum cases, researched country conditions of the countries some of the clients were immigrating from, organized a witness list for each asylum case, gathered supporting documents, and learned about the nuances of asylum cases.

Then my responsibility shifted from asylum cases to U-Visa cases. What I once thought was emotionally challenging reading with regards to asylum cases, U-Visa cases were a lot more difficult. The people seeking U-Visas have gone through some of the most gruesome and terrible crimes that I never thought a person was capable of inflicting to another human being. I got really discouraged reading about such difficult and heartbreaking cases. I started thinking negatively about human beings in general and became really angry with the world realizing the pervasiveness of such crimes and nothing happening to the perpetrators. Then, I realized the other side of the story, and thought there are people who are helping the less fortunate. Children's legal center Chicago really helps individuals who have been through the worst possible situations, and I realized I am fortunate to be a small part of that help they provide. I felt grateful that I am given the opportunity to help others in this little possible way and that too, I am allowed to help with the funding provided by Equal Justice America. It is beyond incredible to think that I am given a chance to do what I set out to do when I was applying to law schools with a less financial burden. So, I decided to work mostly on U-Visa cases for the rest of the summer along with a few asylum cases.

Around the end of my internship, my colleagues were looking for a person who spoke Hindi so that they could interpret for a client intake. I volunteered and they were a bit surprised as they did not know I spoke Hindi. I then did the intake and I felt right at home speaking the language. The clients were happy and comfortable talking about their stories to me in their native language. The intake went smoothly, and I was able to relay that information to the attorney. After this, and until I ended my internship at the Children's Legal Center Chicago, I did intake every other week with Hindi speaking clients and interpreted Hindi conversations with our clients to attorneys. I loved interpreting so much that I decided to volunteer as an interpreter for the Children's Legal Center Chicago for the fall semester too.

It has been an incredibly rewarding experience interning at the Children's Legal Center Chicago and I am grateful for Equal Justice America for allowing me to do so with a lesser burden.