



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



Name: Alida Pitcher-Murray

Law School: Northeastern University School of Law

Organization: Greater Boston Legal Services (10 weeks),
Oklahoma Indian Legal Services (5 weeks)

Update 1: Like some of my peers at NUSL, I have received an Equal Justice America fellowship to fund my unpaid summer internship with the Public Housing Redevelopment Project at Greater Boston Legal Services. I am incredibly grateful to have received funding to help support this important advocacy. This summer, I am working with public housing tenant organizations whose developments are being demolished and rebuilt as part of public-private partnerships. GBLS plays an integral role in ensuring that the rights of public housing tenants are preserved during this years-long process. We are also working to ensure that affordable housing is preserved in Boston, as government funding for public housing declines.

Update 2: I received an Equal Justice America fellowship to fund my unpaid summer legal internship with the Public Housing Redevelopment Project at Greater Boston Legal Services this summer.

So far, I have worked closely with public housing tenants' organizations as they navigate civil negotiations between their task forces, the Boston Housing Authority, and private developers and management companies as part of public-private demolition and rebuilding of affordable housing in Boston. The GBLS attorneys I assist not only inform public housing tenants of their rights, but also empower them to advocate for themselves and their neighbors as their housing changes. This advocacy is crucial as more public housing developments undergo demolition and redevelopment as part of private-public partnerships across the United States.

Update 3: As many of you know, I received an Equal Justice America fellowship to fund my legal internship with the Public Housing Redevelopment Project at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) this summer. I assist public housing tenants' organizations whose developments are being demolished and redeveloped as part of public-private partnerships between the Boston Housing Authority and private developers and management companies. GBLS facilitates groundbreaking civil negotiations between these various partners to ensure the longevity of local communities and preserve affordable housing in Boston. In my role specifically, I review relocation and redevelopment documents, provide trainings to tenant organizations on their by-laws and election procedures, and research potential challenges to affordable housing in Massachusetts. This work is



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novel and unique, and is needed all over the United States as local housing authorities struggle to maintain their developments.

While the GBLS attorneys and I celebrate the preservation of affordable housing in one of the most expensive cities in America, we also mourn the loss of federally funded and managed public housing developments. Public housing has been a central component of urban development since the 1930s in the United States. As inequality worsens, we desperately need to construct and maintain public and affordable housing. Access to stable and affordable housing intersects with many other areas of one's life, such as employment, interaction with law enforcement, education, and healthcare. Ultimately, housing is a legal right that deserves to be treated as such.

Update 4: This summer, I received an Equal Justice America fellowship to fund my legal internship with the Public Housing Redevelopment Project at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). There, I support public housing tenants' organizations whose developments are being demolished and redeveloped as part of public-private partnerships between the Boston Housing Authority and private developers and management companies. GBLS facilitates groundbreaking civil negotiations between these partners to preserve affordable housing in Boston and bolster protections for low-income tenants. In addition to reviewing relocation and redevelopment documents, I provide trainings to the tenant organizations on their by-laws and election procedures and research ways to implement rent control in Boston.

Redevelopment work is a novel form of housing advocacy – as inequality worsens, and as local housing authorities continue to lose funding to maintain their developments, we will see the proliferation of similar public-private partnerships and the desperate need for public interest attorneys to intervene. Unfortunately, the era of fully federally funded and maintained public housing seems to be at a close. As services such as affordable housing become privatized, we need to protect the rights of low-income tenants and the longevity of local communities. Access to stable and affordable housing intersects with many other areas of one's life, such as employment, interaction with law enforcement, education, and healthcare. Ultimately, housing is a legal right that deserves to be treated as such.

Update 5: This summer, I received an Equal Justice America fellowship to fund two legal internships, the first with the Public Housing Redevelopment Project at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) and the second with Oklahoma Indian Legal Services (OILS).

At GBLS, I supported public housing tenants' organizations whose developments are being demolished and redeveloped as part of public-private partnerships between the Boston Housing Authority and private developers and management companies. GBLS facilitates groundbreaking civil negotiations between these partners to preserve affordable housing in Boston and bolster protections for low-income tenants. As part of the Redevelopment Project, I reviewed relocation and redevelopment documents and provided trainings to tenant organizations on their by-laws and election procedures.



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For the second half of the summer, I interned remotely with OILS, where I drafted wills and other probate documents for enrolled tribal members, researched protections under statutes such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and provided information to potential clients on matters of family law.

Engaging in both internships this summer was incredibly rewarding - I feel so grateful to my supervisors for treating me as an equal and bringing me into their advocacy. I am also grateful to the clients with whom I worked, who trusted me with confidential information.

As a result of these experiences, I learned about effective advocacy on behalf of low-income tenants facing eviction or facing the redevelopment of their homes and drafting end of life documents for Indigenous people. However, I am also disturbed by the state of affordable housing. Looking ahead, I am particularly impassioned to fight for increased funding for Indigenous communities who want to construct more affordable housing and repair their current housing stock.

Equal Justice America provided me the opportunity to explore two of my passions and solidify my career goals. I am so grateful for this opportunity. EJA provides much-needed funding to law students (like me) and lawyers who practice public interest legal advocacy and community lawyering. Please consider donating to EJA.