



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Pangea Legal Services

Update 1:

My first few weeks at Pangea Legal Services have been overall very good. I got a substantive assignment right at the start--defending an IJ's decision granting relief to a client from an appeal by the Department of Homeland Security. I've mostly been working on those briefs, and I expect to continue on them until mid-July. I've also worked on some legal research questions relating to immigration detention and employment/labor law. I did not get as much done last week because I felt pretty sick, but I'm feeling much better this week and have my work cut out for me!

Update 2:

I've continued working on the same Board of Immigration Appeals petition to uphold the Immigration Judge's decision to grant relief under the convention against torture for our client. I remain present on organizing calls related to labor strikes in immigration detention facilities and have volunteered to do some legal research tasks to help with this.

Update 3:

Over the past few weeks I finished working on the BIA appeal and went to the post office when we mailed the +400-page filing to the BIA. Since then, I've had smaller research and drafting tasks like a U Visa cover letter. I am also actively working on communications and preparation to support detained people on strike at immigration detention centers.

Update 4:

This week I am preparing more materials for the labor strike for people in detention, researching a way to automate exhibit references between annotated table of contents (ATOC) and briefs, working on a special immigrant juvenile status (sij), and working on an ATOC Re: changed country conditions in Nicaragua.



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Update 5:

In reflecting on my summer at Pangea Legal Services, I have experienced a mixture of joy, concern, and hope. I am happy that I had the chance to work directly with resilient, thoughtful, and engaged detained and non-detained clients.

For the first half of my internship, I worked with a non-detained client who was very concerned about the status of his appeal. He had been represented by a private lawyer several years before who had not briefed the BIA after DHS appealed grants of relief at the immigration judge level, and his relief had been twice overturned by the BIA. It was frustrating to see that the client could possibly have had a better outcome and been finished with proceedings if the lawyer had put in a few weeks of work to defend the client's first grant.

Writing the client's appeal with Pangea's experienced immigration lawyers was a cerebral and engaging process, and I am very hopeful but also concerned about whether the BIA will uphold the IJ's grant. This summer I learned a lot about the uncertainty and anxiety that comes with waiting for decisions on appeals. My fingers are crossed.

I had the chance to work on more typical, smaller-scale visa applications and affirmative relief as well. It was nice to have a mix of more straightforward work in addition to complex legal research and writing.

Finally, I had the chance to develop and present Know Your Rights materials for people in immigration detention. I focused on materials related to potential California employment-law causes of action to achieve some kind of prosecutorial discretion or other immigration relief. Working with experienced lawyers and advocates for immigrants was a rewarding process, and I'm glad I got to meet clients and other engaged, knowledgeable, and skilled advocates. I loved working at Pangea. I am currently applying for funding to work in West Virginia doing related work (representation in employment and immigration matters for workers in rural poultry plants), and I expect to draw on the mentors, skills, and experiences I gained from Pangea to make this project a success.