



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



Name: Joan Komolafe

Law School: UCLA School of Law

Organization: Jerome N. Frank Legal Services

Organization - Yale Law School

Update 1: These past two weeks, I started an amazing opportunity at @Yale Law School! My fellowship has already taught me so much in the world of transactional, corporate, real estate and tax law working under the close guidance of both a clinical lecturer and a professor from Yale, I have already started to expand upon the knowledge I gained during my 1st year as a David J. Epstein Fellow at UCLA School of Law. I am also extremely grateful for the Equal Justice America Fellowship Award I was awarded by Equal Justice America. This award has provided funding for me to pursue my Fellowship at Yale and serves as a supplement to the stipend I receive over the summer. Equal Justice America supports various law students like myself during their summer work!

Update 2: I have really enjoyed celebrating Father's Day and Juneteenth with my loved ones this past weekend. It allowed me time to reflect and be grateful for my work this summer. I was granted an amazing opportunity at @YaleLawSchool. I have already started helping black community members in Connecticut establish their nonprofit organizations and develop a guide for community members who want to form their own cooperative organizations!

I've been able to do this work while simultaneously learning about federal tax law, corporate transactional business practices, and entity formation. Because of this, I have been able to gain a deeper understanding of the law and how community organizers can use it to reach their goals.

Update 3: As I begin my new semester, I am taking more classes that align with my goal of helping people through the law and taking on other responsibilities. Reflecting on my work this summer, I also want to share the concluding update on my summer fellowship. Even though I just started my second year, I am already applying the skills I learned about client-centered lawyering and research I learned during my fellowship at the Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization. Equal Justice America sponsored me this summer, allowing me to continue working and learning in person at Yale Law School, although I attend school all the way in Los



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Angeles at UCLA. I completed several projects that served the people of New Haven, Connecticut. I did a lot, but some of the projects that I enjoyed the most were: reviewing a lease for a client and helping that client work through issues of private benefit, working with federal IRS tax documents to help a client establish their nonprofit organization, and helping write and edit a co-op guide for people interested in establishing their own organization.

Compiling research and resources regarding the formation of a cooperative tested my ability to find information and then repurpose and explain this information to a lay audience. The opportunity to help our client negotiate their lease helped enhance my discovery skills. It allowed me to get familiar with a new area of law I had never seen before and introduced me to transactional work. I had not yet substantively seen transactional work as a first-year law student. I was also able to expand my knowledge about nonprofit law. Nonprofit law is an area of public interest law I am passionate about, and this experience allowed me to develop skills for possible future clients. The wide array of skills and knowledge across the board I was able to obtain from the lunchtime lectures I attended, including trauma-informed lawyering and professional responsibility workshops, will not only assist me as I embark upon my professional journey. A lot of what we learn throughout our lives will help at some other point, and I think that would be even more true in law.

When working on the lease for the clinic's client, I could work on my negotiation skills, allowing me to effectively improve my mediation skills which are helpful in any aspect of law I may enter. Writing and editing the co-op guide allowed me to work on transforming my legal writing and take in the substantive law more effectively. This project helped me work on my ability to put legal documents into a format that is helpful to those not in the world of law. Filling out the IRS Tax documents for our client allowed me to learn and research from the Clio legal document database and obtain and compile documents. This work for our client allowed me to understand the differences in real estate law's legal and technical terms. My newfound real estate law understanding will be beneficial in the long term as a life skill and a transferable transactional law skill.

I'm very grateful for the opportunity I have been given this past summer and can't wait to use the knowledge I now possess to continue helping disenfranchised groups of people.