



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1: I've just finished my third week of work at Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) in Boston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering equal opportunity and fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. As a Boston native, it is an honor to serve marginalized communities in the Greater Boston Area and to learn from LCR's innovative and committed legal team in the process. Over the past few weeks, I have developed a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of inequity that fuel housing, educational, employment, and health disparities along racial and economic lines. While this may sound demoralizing, I am also developing skills and strategies for tackling these issues, which will empower me to more effectively fight for justice, both as a law student and, in two years, a public interest lawyer.

Update 2: I've just finished my fifth week of work at Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) in Boston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering equal opportunity and fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants. This past week, my fellow interns and I had the honor of accompanying the victims of a brutal hate crime to the trial of one of the perpetrators. Despite the judge's failure to meaningfully sentence the assailants, the victims nonetheless bravely stood up for their rights and those of other Spanish-speaking immigrants, and educated the public (including myself) regarding the myriad ways in which the legal system fails low-income communities of color. Despite this lamentable trial result, I feel incredibly grateful to have the opportunity this summer to contribute to efforts to legally support low-income people in Greater Boston and to develop my skills and knowledge base, so that I may more ethically and effectively serve such communities as a public interest attorney post-graduation.

Update 3: This is my seventh week of work at Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) in Boston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering equal opportunity and fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants.



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Over the past couple weeks, I have worked on LCR's BizGrow project, an economic uplift program that supports women and minority entrepreneurs. I drafted guidance for small businesses regarding how they can respond to the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Dobbs*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* and undermined the federal constitutional right to abortion access; this guidance discusses how employers can legally support their employees that cross state lines to seek abortions, as well as how *Dobbs* will affect employer-based healthcare coverage. My fellow interns and I are also helping prepare for next week's BizGrow Conference, an in-person, outdoor event that will connect these entrepreneurs with pro bono counsel. Working with BizGrow has been a valuable educational experience, and has made me aware of how transactional legal work, and not solely litigation, can serve social justice.

Update 4: I'm finishing up my ninth week of work at Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) in Boston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering equal opportunity and fighting discrimination on behalf of people of color and immigrants.

Last week, LCR hosted its annual BizGrow Conference, which brought together hundreds of Big Law attorneys and over one hundred minority entrepreneurs to provide the latter with free advice regarding starting and growing their businesses. As the clients met with numerous corporate attorneys, they expressed gratitude that they were able to access the types of services that are typically only available to larger businesses and the wealthy. They left empowered to pursue their goals of economic independence and prosperity. The Conference was an exhilarating and moving experience; it showed me that, despite the civil rights sector's focus on litigation as the primary means of achieving justice, transactional work can also be an effective vehicle for promoting economic justice and equity. I plan to continue to seek opportunities to engage in transactional work that serves low-income communities.

Update 5: My summer at Lawyers for Civil Rights (LCR) as an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow was a formative and empowering experience. Among numerous other projects and experiences, I had the opportunity to: contribute to early-stage investigations of systemic discrimination and civil rights violations; conduct legal research on topics ranging from exclusionary zoning enforcement mechanisms to "green gentrification" to FOIA caselaw; and co-facilitate a conference that provided pro bono legal advice to hundreds of minority entrepreneurs. These projects, coupled with the mentorship and guidance of each and every LCR attorney, helped me develop and refine my legal research, analysis, and writing skills. They also enabled me to learn about a wide variety of topics; this was one of my main draws to LCR, which maintains a docket that spans a wide breadth of civil rights issues.

Beyond skill development, I gained a more comprehensive understanding of the day-to-day reality of practicing civil rights law, which only confirmed my dedication to pursuing civil rights litigation post-law school. I also discovered new legal interests, which I look forward to exploring further. For instance, I performed transactional work for the first time; specifically, I helped form LLCs and draft cooperative organizing



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agreements for minority entrepreneurs; I also advised entrepreneurs regarding the tax implications of various business structure choices. This experience showed me that transactional work is a skill that is not only useful to corporate attorneys— rather, transactional work can be an effective vehicle for promoting economic justice and equity. Lastly, in the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision, I created one-pager fact sheets to inform business owners of how they could lawfully support employees that need to cross state lines to access abortion care. Responding quickly to the decision in a manner that may have mitigated the decision’s impact on someone made me feel less powerless in a moment that was otherwise discouraging and disempowering.

One of the most valuable aspects of my summer, though, were the people with whom I worked and formed connections. I had the opportunity to work with all six LCR attorneys, and each of them took the time to answer my questions, give me substantive feedback, and to give me advice and guidance regarding law school and my early career. Observing the attorneys at work demonstrated the diligence, resilience, and consistency necessary to lead a successful career in civil rights litigation. I am grateful to have been along for the ride and to have witnessed both the frustrations and victories of litigation; along the way, I learned countless little lessons that will shape the way I move forward in my legal career. In addition, my fellow interns, Miguel and Berlindyne, were constant sources of help, support, and camaraderie. I look forward to following their careers and all of the incredible work they do.

Thanks to the support of Equal Justice America and Yale Law School, I was able to work full-time at no cost to LCR. If you have the capacity to help ensure other law students can pursue public interest work on behalf of low-income clients, consider donating.