



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



Name: Emily Masse

Law School: Boston College Law School

Organization: MetroWest Legal Services

Update 1:

This summer, I have the privilege of working as a Legal Intern in the Immigration Unit at MetroWest Legal Services in Framingham, MA. MWLS provides free civil legal services to immigrants, elders, victims of crimes, disabled persons, and low-income individuals in a number of communities. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to MWLS's mission of promoting social, economic, and legal justice for all.

Currently, my work at MWLS centers around providing legal assistance to families evacuated from Afghanistan in August 2021. Just last week, the Biden Administration announced the implementation of a re-parole process for Afghans who were initially paroled into the U.S. a little under two years ago. It has been an eye-opening experience to navigate the re-parole process in its initial stages and think critically about how it can be improved. While the re-parole process is a step in the right direction, there is much more to be done to help Afghan families achieve stability in the U.S. In just over two weeks at MWLS, I have been able to engage with several families who were evacuated from Afghanistan, and connecting with them is by far the best part of this work.

My work at MWLS and the work of many other law students around the country is supported by Equal Justice America. EJA is an organization that strives to advance justice for all by funding law students who provide legal assistance to underserved populations.

Update 2:

I'm back with my second EJA Fellow Update! Since my last post, I have continued to engage with Afghan families and help them apply for re-parole. While an extended period of parole will certainly help our clients, parole provides no path to long-term stability in the United States. Now that we have completed re-parole applications for nearly all of our clients, we are shifting gears and applying for other forms of relief (such as asylum) that can ultimately lead to lawful permanent resident status. Applying for asylum can be emotionally



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demanding. I look forward to using the skills I've developed at Boston College Law School and Boston College School of Social Work to support clients holistically throughout the process.

I am so grateful for the attorneys at MetroWest Legal Services who have provided me with incredible guidance and several opportunities to learn about the many facets of immigration law. My experience at MWLS is supported by Equal Justice America, an organization funding otherwise unpaid legal interns who provide legal assistance to underserved populations.

Update 3:

I'm excited to share another EJA Fellow Update! As I continue my work with MetroWest Legal Services (MWLS), I am learning more and more about the many facets of immigration law. In addition to providing legal assistance to Afghan families, I am helping U-Visa holders apply for adjustment of status to lawful permanent resident. Applying for a Green Card is a very exciting and highly anticipated milestone for many clients. I am thrilled to be able to support clients as they get one step closer to security and stability in the U.S.

My work at MWLS is made possible by Equal Justice America (EJA), an organization that strives to increase access to legal assistance for disenfranchised and underserved communities. EJA funds law students, like me and several of my peers at Boston College Law School, who provide legal services through otherwise unpaid internships.

Update 4:

I'm back with my fourth EJA Fellow Update! Throughout my time at MetroWest Legal Services (MWLS), I have been able to assist clients in applying for various immigration benefits and forms of relief including re-parole, asylum, adjustment of status, and work authorization. Additionally, I am helping a client apply for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), which provides a path to lawful permanent resident status for unmarried youth under age 21 who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by at least one parent. Applying for SIJS is a bifurcated process that requires applicants to engage with a state juvenile court and USCIS. Through assisting with this SIJS application, I am gaining hands-on experience navigating both the MA Probate and Family Court system and the U.S. immigration system.

Access to counsel is incredibly important for individuals and families navigating the immigration system, as those with counsel are significantly more likely to successfully obtain a benefit or relief. Thanks to the support of Equal Justice America (EJA), I have been able to play a small part in the efforts to provide legal assistance to immigrant families across MA. EJA is an organization that seeks to advance justice for all by funding law students, like me and several of my peers at Boston College Law School, who provide legal services to underserved populations through otherwise unpaid internships.

Update 5:

As my summer with MetroWest Legal Services (MWLS) comes to an end, it is time to share my final EJA Fellow Update. Reflecting on my summer with MWLS, I am feeling so grateful and inspired. During



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my time at MWLS, I learned so much about the substantive and technical aspects of immigration law, but I learned even more about the kind of attorney I aspire to be. The attorneys at MWLS approach their work with so much compassion and commitment. They are zealous advocates truly dedicated to upholding the dignity of every person they represent and work with. I am excited to follow their example as I strive to become an empathetic and client-centered lawyer.

I am very thankful for the MWLS attorneys who offered me constant guidance and support. I am also incredibly grateful for the many clients who shared their stories with me throughout the summer. It was an absolute privilege to hear their stories and learn about their lives. Connecting with clients has been a powerful source of motivation and inspiration, one that I believe will stay with me throughout my final year at Boston College Law School.

Lastly, I would like to thank Equal Justice America (EJA) for supporting my work at MWLS. I have witnessed firsthand the powerful impact that legal services organizations have in their communities. For example, when just this month dozens of Haitian families entered emergency shelter in MA after immigrating to the U.S., the attorneys at MWLS did not hesitate to collaborate with community partners and help the families apply for work authorization. Legal services organizations like MWLS increase access to justice for underserved populations and respond to urgent community needs whenever possible. EJA supports this important work by funding law students who work at legal services organizations through otherwise unpaid internships. If you would like to support EJA's mission of increasing access to justice, please consider donating.