



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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Law School: Columbia Law School

Organization: Kids in Need of Defense

Update 1: It has been three weeks since I started my summer internship at Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) at the Washington D.C. field office. KIND works to create a world where no child appears in immigration court without the assistance of quality legal representation.

During my first three weeks I have participated in trainings about the types of relief available to our clients, learned techniques to protect my mental health and manage burnout, and have met with clients to work on their applications. I have learned so much already and cannot wait to see what the rest of the summer holds.

This summer would not be possible without the Columbia Law School summer funding program and the generous support of Equal Justice America. Equal Justice America funds students working in public interest internships all over the country who are doing work to help protect the rights of others. EJA allows law students to pursue public interest summer positions while alleviating the burden of unpaid internships.

Update 2: It's hard to believe that it's already been a month since I started my summer internship at Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).

The two weeks since my last update didn't exactly go to plan, since I got sidelined by Covid. Everyone at KIND was incredibly understanding and supportive of my need to rest. I was reminded of the importance of finding a workplace that cares about me, whether I'm at my usual level of productivity or sidelined by an unforeseen circumstance.

In the past week, I got to observe my first intake and will lead one by myself for the first-time next week. I have also continued working on SIJS cases and an asylum brief. It has been busy, but I am learning a lot and cannot wait to see how the rest of the summer goes.

These opportunities would not be possible without the generous support from Equal Justice America. It's hard to accept unpaid summer work and organizations like EJA are essential in alleviating that burden.

Update 3: In the past two weeks at Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), I've gotten the chance to observe one intake and conduct two of my own. During the intake, my job is to speak with the client about their experiences



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in their home country, why they came to the United States, and what their life has been like since they arrived. The stories have been heartbreaking and uplifting, and I've learned so much in such a short period of time. In my intakes, I've had to adjust my interview style to reflect the age and personality of the kid I was working with, which has challenged my interviewing and Spanish language skills. I am excited to keep working directly with the unaccompanied minors that KIND serves to ensure that they have the resources and support that they need to tackle the U.S. immigration system. [#ejafellowupdate](#)

None of this would be possible without the support of [Columbia Law School](#) and [Equal Justice America](#). While so many people go into law school with the hopes of pursuing public interest law, the financial reality quickly sets in and many people are unable to pursue their true passion. Equal Justice America supports law students in being able to pursue their goals by alleviating some of the financial burden of taking a summer internship.

Update 4: TLDR: Use this Amazon wishlist to help unaccompanied migrant youth in Washington D.C. get ready for the school year!

Supporting unaccompanied youth in Washington D.C. goes beyond just providing them with legal services. While immigration status is an essential part of the work that [Kids in Need of Defense \(KIND\)](#) does, the social services team helps connect our clients with resources in D.C., including the D.C. school system and health care. While the resources are available, the paths to accessing them are complex, often requiring computer literacy and the ability to understand English. Our SSCs work tirelessly to make the process more simple so that clients can take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

This time of the year, our clients are getting ready for school, and you can help them by using this Amazon wishlist to get clients the supplies that they need. If you have the means to donate, I'd highly encourage you to take this opportunity to support these kids!

This summer at KIND, I've gotten to see how a legal team and a social services team can work together to provide clients with holistic services that ensure that all of their needs are met. I will be sure to take these lessons into my future career and am grateful for every opportunity I've received.

Update 5: It's been a little over a week since I ended my summer internship with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) in the Washington D.C. office. I am so grateful to everyone at KIND, especially my supervisor Wendy Diaz, for all of their guidance. I learned so much about immigration law, client interactions, and how to find joy even when the work we do is so hard. I cannot wait to take what I learned into the upcoming semester, where I will be taking immigration law and participating in the Immigrants' Rights Clinic at school.

This summer reaffirmed that I want to do immigration work next summer and after law school! I am excited to see what is next and will forever be grateful to KIND, Equal Justice America, and Columbia Law School for helping me on this journey!