



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1:

I've just completed my first couple of weeks as a summer clerk in the Consumer Rights and Economic Justice project at Public Counsel. I've loved getting to know my colleagues and fellow interns and have loved diving into consumer law. One thing I've especially enjoyed is how varied consumer law is -- I've learned a bit about everything from predatory student loans, to bankruptcy, to Covid rent debt, to foreclosure. I've gotten the opportunity to work with clients on intake and to research approaches to student loan discharge. Thanks so much to EJA for making this possible!

Update 2:

I am halfway through my time at Public Counsel. I've learned a ton about how direct services organizations work in practice, which was one of my main goals for this summer! Every week we have a big meeting with the whole team to discuss new cases that have come in ("case review meeting") and assign tasks and next steps. People can also ask for advice or brainstorming on where to take cases. It's always interesting to hear attorneys weigh in on one another's work. It's a reminder that the practice of law is a constant learning experience.

Update 3:

This past week has involved a robust mix of client facing work and research behind the scenes. On the client side, I have done a bunch of client intakes, and follow-up with clients. I've enjoyed putting together clients' stories with support of their documents into a single memo. I then work with supervising attorneys to create an action plan and set of next steps. On the research side, I am working on a quick turnaround memo to respond to a legal question that came up in a deposition. This task has been really interesting because it shows how legal



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research comes up in the day to day of lawyering. It is not at all abstract! Our client will directly benefit from us answering this question on a timely basis.

Update 4:

As I near the end of my time at Public Counsel, I am reflecting on what it takes to piece together a complicated legal situation and to respond accordingly. I was working with a client dealing with the fallout of a predatory auto loan, and each time I wanted to take a next step on her case, I realized I needed more information about what happened from the client. At first I felt bad for bothering her so much – she was super busy and the situation she was dealing with very stressful! But over the course of working with her, I felt more confident reaching out when necessary, and explaining why I was getting back in touch. The back and forth we've had has also built up our personal rapport. The experience has made me think about how many different factors feed into a single legal situation – from various forms of economic injustice and precarity, to family dynamics, to luck and timing – and the time and care that is involved in capturing these factors upon intake and in follow-up conversations.

Update 5:

I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from the amazing advocates at Public Counsel this summer. I watched in awe as they expertly unwound complex situations and advocated for economic justice alongside clients. Looking back, I'm especially proud of the work I did on a foreclosure case. I did a deep dive into the client's property records, worked with the client's HUD housing counselor, and coordinated with outside counsel to create a plan to help the client stay in her home. It was very educational for me to see how the housing safety net ecosystem works in LA – which resources exist, how to access them, which players are involved, and how to combine forces across agencies and organizations to achieve a common goal. My experience coordinating helped me understand that not every solution is purely legal – often the law is just one piece of the larger puzzle, which involves social work, local government, state and federal policy, advocacy etc. I look forward to developing my understanding of this interplay in law school and beyond.