



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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Law School: Northeastern University School of Law

Organization: National Housing Law Project

Update 1: This summer, I was awarded an EJA fellowship to support my summer clerkship with the National Housing Law Project (NHLP). I am so grateful for this assistance; without it, I would not be able to continue engaging in public interest advocacy.

NHLP engages in advocacy and litigation to promote housing justice across the US. It also provides technical support to legal service attorneys and organizers who are on the front lines of preventing evictions and safeguarding tenants' rights. In my clerkship so far, I have gathered data on states' implementation of the Homeowner's Assistance Fund, paying particular attention to states' efficacy in distributing funds to low-income homeowners. I have also conducted research for federal litigation matters that assert the rights of public housing residents.

Update 2: This summer, I was awarded an Equal Justice America (EJA) fellowship to support my summer clerkship with the National Housing Law Project (NHLP). I am so grateful for this assistance; without it, I would not be able to continue engaging in public interest advocacy.

NHLP engages in advocacy and litigation to promote housing justice across the US. It also provides technical support to legal service attorneys and organizers who are on the front lines of preventing evictions and safeguarding tenants' rights. At this point in my clerkship, I have helped to gather data on states' implementation of the Homeowner's Assistance Fund, paying particular attention to states' efficacy in distributing funds to low-income homeowners. I have also conducted research for federal litigation to promote the rights of public housing residents in Chicago.

Advocacy such as that being conducted at NHLP is crucial to promoting housing justice. Moreover, funding from organizations like EJA is needed to ensure that law students and attorneys have the means to engage in this advocacy.



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Update 3: On Zoom with NHLP! This summer I have been awarded an EJA fellowship to assist federal litigation and policy advocacy efforts on behalf of low-income renters and homeowners. Housing is a human right, one that ensures the long-term financial stability and health of families and communities. My current advocacy involves constructing litigation to protect the rights of public housing residents to safe, affordable housing.

I could not do this advocacy without funding—law students doing public interest internships are often not paid for their work, while their colleagues at private firms may earn tens of thousands of dollars in a single summer.

Update 4: The past few weeks, I have been supporting litigation brought by NHLP in its partnership with Earthjustice and local community organizations in Flint, Michigan. Not only have Flint residents suffered from lead in their water, but also heavy industry that severely damages the health and home values of local low-income, majority Black communities. See <https://lnkd.in/eZ7buCv2>. This is a serious environmental justice harm that follows decades of racist zoning, segregation, and exposure to toxins. Partnerships between housing and environmental organizations are crucial to challenging decisions by state and local government to inflict environmental justice harms. I am so proud to be part of this necessary movement to tackle environmental justice in all its forms.

Update 5: Good afternoon all,

As most of you know, this summer, I have been a law clerk with the National Housing Law Project. NHLP attorneys engage in cutting-edge litigation and policy advocacy on behalf of legal services organizations and impacted communities to promote housing rights and justice. As a summer clerk, I have assisted a range of housing justice advocacy efforts, including policy advocacy regarding the implementation of the Homeowners' Assistance Fund and federal litigation for the rights of public housing residents.

One such effort is NHLP's litigation on behalf of community organizations and low-income residents in the ABLA Homes litigation in Chicago. Right before the end of Lori Lightfoot's tenancy as Mayor of Chicago, the local housing authority agreed to lease 23 acres of land set aside for public housing to the owner of the Chicago Fire, a professional soccer team. This decision, rushed and lacking transparency to local residents, is one of many backroom deals between the housing authority and private actors that negatively impact low-income communities of color. The land at issue in this litigation had been promised as land for new public housing to local communities for decades. NHLP is one of many organizations representing community groups fighting this deal. As a law clerk, I have contributed to research on standing, rights of action, and reviewability under the APA. I am honored to have worked alongside tireless and fearless housing advocates, and to be able to support local communities experiencing displacement.



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My summer clerkship has reaffirmed my commitment to social justice advocacy, particularly in supporting public housing residents facing eviction or the disposition or demolition of their developments. Access to housing is a national crisis, that disproportionately affects low-income communities of color. In addition to the lack of affordable housing options, local housing authorities have increasingly sold off land and developments to private actors because they cannot, or will not, pay for repairs or manage their properties. The privatization of public housing is only one of many threats to the accessibility and stability of affordable housing in the United States. Privatization serves to exacerbate the numerous harms already faced by low-income homeowners and renters, including environmental justice harms, fair housing violations, poor conditions, foreclosure, predatory lending, and gentrification. I am eager to begin my career as a housing attorney to combat these interconnected harms.

My summer clerkship would not have been possible without financial support through Equal Justice America. Choosing to pursue public interest, in a legal system that encourages and celebrates corporate interests, is incredibly challenging. Securing funding for summer internships is not easy to do. However, Equal Justice America has made this possible for me and so many other law students. If you believe in supporting social justice advocacy, please consider donating to EJA.

Thank you so much!