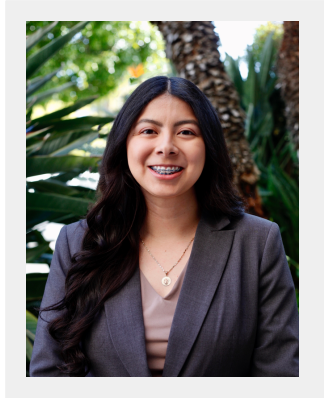




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



Name: Isel Ramirez

Law School: Southwestern Law School

Organization: Public Counsel

Update 1:

I am so grateful to be receiving funding from [Equal Justice America](#) this summer for my work as a summer clerk at [Public Counsel](#) in the Community Development Project.

As a summer clerk, I have the opportunity to work with local coalitions and community members that have organized and are advocating for affordable housing initiatives. Housing insecurity is a growing issue in the United States, housing has become unaffordable, and people are being forced out of their homes. I have learned so much about the many issues that the community is facing and the different initiatives that are working to address these issues.

Equal Justice America is a nonprofit that helps fund law students working with vulnerable citizens and people in poverty—increasing the number of future lawyers who have experience doing public interest work and ensuring everyone has access to justice.

I invite you all to consider contributing to this important initiative so more students like myself can continue to advocate for the community.

<https://lnkd.in/grHWXXVi>

[#EJAFellowUpdate](#)

Update 2: Over the last month, I have learned so much at [Public Counsel](#)! I appreciate the program and my supervisor for the multiple opportunities to learn how to advocate for



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community members through the use of the law. I grew up witnessing how a community can thrive together, but also decline based on the opportunities available in the community. Through the Community Development Project, there are services to empower individuals to pursue financial independence as small businesses and street vendors. I have been involved in assisting small business owners develop contracts for their businesses. It has been so rewarding because having one's own business can be life-changing. I have learned about the process people must take so that they can put their visions of helping their communities into action as non-profits and how to remain compliant with the state. As someone who has worked with multiple non-profits, I have enjoyed learning more about the process. There are so many requirements that unless someone is well-informed in the process there are multiple risks for error.

I invite you all to consider contributing to this important initiative so more students like myself can continue to advocate for the community.

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[#EJAFellowUpdates](#)

[Southwestern Law School](#)

Update 3:

This summer, I have enjoyed my time providing support to community members, small businesses, and nonprofits on their legal issues. Advocacy has always been one of my passions and I am grateful to have the opportunity to work at Public Counsel to execute this work. No one should lose what they have worked for because they cannot afford legal representation or an advocate to support their work. I presented to a network of small business owners, and street vendors to explain the different types of vendor permits required to sell in Los Angeles. I was moved by learning about the hustle these individuals have to make ends meet and pursue their passions. This past week, I also had the unique opportunity to join Los Angeles housing rights groups that successfully campaigned to have the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors pass the Right to Counsel for tenants that are facing eviction. This is a historic victory! Tenants facing eviction are often dealing with many disadvantages like going against a landlord with legal representation. The recurring event that inspired this policy has consistently been disproportionately in favor of landlords.

I invite you all to consider contributing to this important initiative so more students like myself can continue to advocate for the community. Working in the public sector is not



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accessible to everyone due to the limited resources. By supporting this fundraiser you can help another student next year receive some funding to pursue their passion.

https://www.classy.org/fundraiser/4773464?is_new=true

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Update 4: In the last few weeks, I've had the opportunity to have client interaction and learn more about the law relating to small businesses such as nonprofits and home childcare. I assisted a client by drafting a contract for their childcare business to ensure the terms of the contract reflected what she wanted. It was fascinating to apply the concepts I learned in contract law and have an understanding of the effects it has on people. I was touched by this client because the owner was being assisted by their daughter. This was a new experience for both of them, and it reminded me of the many times I supported my mother in her employment. Operating these childcare facilities has the potential to change the life of the family and those that they will serve. Additionally, now I see how property law and childcare law overlap, but also how California law provides protections to these small business owners to provide affordable childcare to many families.

I invite you all to consider contributing to this important initiative so more students like myself can continue to advocate for the community. Working in the public sector is not accessible to everyone due to the limited resources. By supporting this fundraiser you can help another student next year receive some funding to pursue their passion.

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[#EJAFellowUpdate](#)

Update 5:

After ten weeks I concluded my summer at Public Counsel! I have so much appreciation for the work that the attorneys I worked with do every day! I leave my summer clerkship with so much awareness about the many legal matters that community members face constantly and without many resources.

Growing up in San Bernardino, I witnessed how much of the community struggled to access the necessary resources to make ends meet. I know if there were more programs like the Community Development Project it would have drastically changed the lives of many. I had countless opportunities to provide support to Angelenos that sought to change their circumstances for something so better. During the summer, I provided support to these individuals and empowered them in the trajectory of their lives! I was able to use my legal



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knowledge, and research abilities to advocate for hard-working people! I am so honored that I was able to serve them in their journeys because while people do not choose the zip code they were born in they should have the opportunity to seek upward mobility.

I am thrilled to know that I can continue to be a community advocate and still be involved in local policy efforts as a lawyer. A major reason I returned to school was to understand the law so I could one-day draft laws that were representative of the communities that implemented these laws. Time and time again laws are provided by the state but unintentionally can hurt the community more than help. I had the opportunity to sit in different meetings comprised of attorneys, advocates, and community members to choose the best language that would protect the needs of the community. It was the first time in my life that I saw all these members with different titles sit at the table to discuss the issues in the community. I witnessed how the community organized to demand their elected officials to take action and address issues that affected many tenants. In the end, I witnessed a victory that took many years to achieve. It was a major win for the community.

Additionally, I learned about the law relating to small business owners and street vendors in the City of Los Angeles. I learned about the different types of harassment these vendors face as they work tirelessly to support their families. There are many obstacles that vendors face, and I hope that in the future I can continue to assist these community members to have the opportunity to work.

Thank you to Public Counsel and the Equal Justice Opportunity Fellowship for the opportunity to grow as an advocate and professional!

[#EJAFellowUpdate](#)