

Dear Executive Director Ruben,

I hope that this letter finds you well. My name is Maiya Werba and I am one of the law students lucky enough to have received an Equal Justice America (EJA) award this past summer. I wanted to express how meaningful and important it was to me to receive this additional support for my summer position at The Arc of the US. I have always wanted to be able to work with and advocate for individuals with disabilities but had been concerned about the financial elements of this path for a summer position, which is why this fellowship was so helpful to me.

Being able to engage in such meaningful work at The Arc was incredibly enlightening and an excellent learning opportunity for me. Firstly, I was able to spend a lot of time discussing the field with my supervisors and learning about the nuances of disability rights work. Secondly, I gained experience in a wide variety of legal skills, such as deposition review, writing memorandums, and legal research. However, my most valuable learning came from seeing how my colleagues discussed and approached the cases and clients they were working on. Everyone took substantial effort to ensure that they were considering the best possible outcome for the cases and spoke sensitively and affirmingly about the issues faced in our cases. Moreover, they used these same approaches to create an open, positive and well-balanced workplace culture that was very pleasant to work in.

While the cases I worked on are still in active or pending litigation so I cannot discuss specifics, I truly feel as though I was able to engage in important and impactful work that will affect individuals with disabilities across the United States. I hope that I can use this experience to continue to do similar work next summer and throughout my legal career.

Sincerely,

Maiya Werba