



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

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Update 1: I recently finished my first week interning with the BU Civil Litigation and Justice Program. Right off the bat, I could tell that I would have the opportunity to contribute to making people's lives better through substantive litigation work. Within the first day, I was "thrown into the fire," tasked with drafting part of a motion in a disabilities discrimination case. Throughout my first week, I had the opportunity to conduct research on issues related to disability discrimination, to hear feedback on my writing content and style, and most importantly to speak with our client. Through this process, I can honestly say that while it may seem like our case is "small" in the grand scheme of things, it means the world to the people we are helping. The reason I came to law school in the first place was to have the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives, and I feel like I am in the perfect position to begin to do so. Moreover, through the substantive work I am being assigned, I am gaining valuable skills including how to communicate with clients, how to interpret various kinds of evidence, and how to put all that into an argument—skills that will help me along the rest of this journey. I look forward to building on this great start for the rest of the summer!

Update 2: In the midst of my fourth week interning with the BU Civil Litigation and Justice Program, I have the opportunity to look back on a hectic, yet valuable first few weeks, while also looking forward to the many cases to come this summer. In my first three weeks, I gained experience that law school—regardless of how important it is for development—simply cannot provide. In addition to gaining valuable experience writing an opposition to a motion for summary judgement (which was a new and exciting experience in its own right), I gained exposure to some of the lesser recognized, yet supremely important factors that go into winning a case for a client who relies on us. Among others, this exposure included carefully choosing which exhibits to attach, how to file motions, proper etiquette for interacting with opposing counsel, and how to handle the overall stress of the editing and filing process.

Moving onto what is to come, I am pleased to say that I will be dealing with several housing discrimination cases among other cases. I am hoping that through this process I will get



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substantive advocacy experience—both written and oral. I am excited to report back in a couple of weeks when this begins to unfold!

Update 3: As I near the halfway point of my internship with the Boston University Civil Litigation and Justice Program, I want to reiterate what a valuable experience it has been to work on cases that have a real impact for clients in need. As I reflect on my experience thus far, I wanted to share some of the practical skills that I have developed that, thanks to EJA, will help me throughout my legal career.

One of these practical skills is effective communication with clients. Particularly with the work that we are doing, it is vitally important to keep an open and honest line of communication with our clients who face serious issues. By interacting with our client base, I have improved my ability to deliver difficult news, explain complex problems/procedures in a simplified way, and to form relationships generally with all sorts of people.

Another key skill that this opportunity has allowed me to develop is my ability to effectively work with a team dedicated to a common goal. In law school, brief assignments were very individualized; here, there are multiple people working on the same briefs/assignments, which can make it difficult to stay consistent and to produce a polished product for the client. However, by learning to communicate and work off of each other—bouncing ideas, checking for errors, etc.—we have not only been able to stay consistent, but have been able to produce a better, more creative product for the client. I look forward to continuing to build these skills as the weeks progress!

Update 4: Approximately three-quarters of the way through my internship, I have largely focused on the most enjoyable learning experiences/experiences in general to this point. For this update, I wanted to share my insight on some challenges (that you can learn from!) that come from working with a civil litigation clinic:

1. Staying organized: I have always thought of myself as an organized person. However, my work this summer has been a different animal. At the moment, I am primarily responsible for five different cases, keeping track of all deadlines and completing whatever work is needed. Through this process, I have found that stress can arise with this kind of workload, particularly with how personal and important the work is for our indigent clients. Thus, it requires a great deal of effort to constantly stay organized, which has been a challenge, but a great learning experience as well.

2. Communicating with people of different backgrounds: Another thing that can be a challenge is communicating with our clients, who have had very different life experiences than my own. Through things like interviewing our clients, I have needed to try to understand this difference to the best of my ability to help them as best I can, but it is not always easy simply given the lack of shared experiences. Nonetheless, developing this kind of communicative ability has, and will continue to be important to my professional development.



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Update 5: After a long, rewarding summer, it is finally time to fully reflect on my experience at the BU civil litigation clinic. From day one, I came to realize that this opportunity would teach me things about practicing law that traditional doctrinal law school classes simply could not. While I have touched on some of these things in past reflections, it is important to reiterate the impact that my role this summer will have on my future work.

For one thing, I really gained perspective on the importance of “learning from your mistakes.” When I first began this summer, I was thrust into the writing of important motions and memorandums for our indigent client, something that I had absolutely no experience with. Naturally, this led to making mistakes—but rather than being content with my work and just saying “well, I tried,” I made every effort to learn and grow in order to give our client the best possible chance. In other words, I found that my growth and ability to learn correlated directly with the success of our clients, something I will carry with me for the rest of my career.

Another important thing that I learned from this experience was how to handle parts of the job that may not seem like “part of the job.” By this, I mean things like the soft skills of reaching out and communicating with administrative agencies to collect documents, and being able to organize yourself to meet multiple deadlines for different clients that rely on you. Things like this are not something that you typically think of when you think of what it means to be a lawyer, but my experience this summer has shown me that to be successful, these are the types of things that are important to master.

Finally, and something that I think is somewhat reflected in all my reflections this summer, I realized the impact that even a single summer by an inexperienced law student can have for clients in need. The law serves as a fallback for those who have been wronged, and I truly feel like I was able to be part of a safety net for those who needed it. This is an experience I will always cherish!