



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Gabriela Ramos
LAW SCHOOL	Chicago Kent College of Law
ORGANIZATION	Center for Conflict Resolution

Update 1: As an Equal Justice America Fellow, I will be giving 5 updates across the summer recapping my work. As I finish my first month at the Center for Conflict Resolution, I have learned a lot about the inner workings of alternative dispute resolution.

Firstly, I have had the pleasure of working with the talented team at CCR to make sure that these mediations run smoothly. I have gotten to work behind the scenes with the case management team, updating volunteers, briefing mediators, checking in parties, and debriefing mediators.

I have also gotten to attend court almost every day. I have worked with judges across Illinois to ensure that parties have efficient intakes. Additionally, I have been able to conduct intakes in both English and Spanish. I have been able to open cases from the live court referrals I've received, essentially being able to see the entire life of a case before me.

I have also been able to complete various trainings to increase my efficiency in working with all kinds of people. I have completed trauma-informed training, given that I will be mediating stressful and sensitive situations this summer. I also completed a trans-affirming training. The trans-affirming training was for CCR staff and volunteers, and it was great to see how involved CCR is with providing their staff and volunteers with opportunities to grow.

I am only getting started with CCR this summer, but I am looking forward to keep learning. I am most excited to get my mediation certification and to continue to work with such a dedicated group.

Update 2: I am halfway through my internship at the Center for Conflict Resolution, so it is time for my 2nd Equal Justice America update of the summer. The past few weeks have been



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absolutely incredible! I have gotten the opportunity to take a more active role at CCR. This includes working solo with clients. I have gotten to do intakes solo, attend court, and work with parties prior to their mediations. Furthermore, I have gained a deeper understanding of what goes into preparing for mediation and how the court process plays into that.

I also want to talk about the most exciting thing I've done, which is finishing my 40-hour mediation skills training! I participated in CCR's mediation skills training and gained so many valuable skills. I can now mediate in the state of Illinois, and I am on track to mediate with CCR soon. I want to thank everyone at CCR for making this possible, including the wonderful staff and the amazing coaches. My favorite part of this training was the diverse cohort and how we helped each other grow over the past week. It was truly an unforgettable experience.

I also attended PILI's Pro Bono Annual Reception. I got to network with fellow PILI interns, as well as attorneys, and the greater Chicago pro bono community. It was remarkable to see and hear about all the great work being done in public interest law, and I am optimistic about our endeavors. Organizations like PILI and EJA make it possible for law students to pursue public interest, so if you wish to donate or get involved, you can.

Update 3: The summer is flying by, and it is time for my third Equal Justice America fellowship summer update. During the past two weeks I have been focused on using all of the skills and resources that I have learned throughout the entirety of my internship.

Firstly, I have focused on attending court calls by myself. I have begun to build rapport with certain judges which has smoothed out the mediation referral process. I have also continued to complete intakes at court by myself, ranging from stalking-no contact cases and small claims/civil trial cases. Not only that, but I have become more knowledgeable in answering client questions regarding the mediation process and what that entails.

Additionally, I have been able to run the Center for Conflict Resolution's mediator zooms. I have gotten to check parties in for their mediations and work closely with volunteers. I have gotten more proficient and briefing and debriefing volunteer mediators, as well as assisting them with any questions they might have during the mediation.

Finally, I have been working towards getting certified to mediate with the Center for Conflict Resolution by participating in mediation simulations. Overall, the past couple of weeks have been incredibly busy and I am excited for the remainder of the summer.



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Update 4: It is time for my fourth and second to last Equal Justice America fellowship update. I have about a week left in my internship with the Center for Conflict Resolution and I have learned so much and am grateful for the entire team for their support.

I have gotten to work on some solo research projects throughout my finals weeks. These projects have gotten me acquainted with different facets of the organization and have kept me on my toes. Additionally, these projects have given me the opportunity to work with different members of the CCR team.

I have also gotten to learn more about the Early Resolution Program. I was able to attend ERP court this week and further understand eviction proceedings. This is incredibly helpful as ERP cases are incredibly common at CCR and I will start mediating these soon.

I was also able to attend Equal Justice America's Student and Alumni reception hosted by Sarah Siskind, Partner, Miner, Barnhill & Galland PC. It was a great experience, and I was able to connect with other EJA Fellows in the Chicago area and talk about our work this summer.

Update 5:

The summer is officially over for me, and it is time for my fifth and final Equal Justice America fellowship post. This summer has been incredibly valuable for my growth as a professional and soon to be lawyer. I want to thank the Center for Conflict Resolution, for so graciously hosting me the past couple months. I was able to dive in headfirst and explore vast areas of the legal world.

I've gotten to work in a variety of fields including, eviction/housing, stalking no contact/order of protection, small claims/civil trials, jv/family cases, and more. I've had the opportunity to attend different courtrooms every week for all of these different fields. This opportunity has allowed me to adapt and further understand the differences and intricacies of each area of law.

I am also thrilled to say that I have officially certified with the Center for Conflict Resolution as a mediator! After completing the Mediation Skills Training in June, I participated in a number of simulations to help me certify as a volunteer. I have now been able to mediate a number of cases and take on some challenging situations. Being able to mediate has been incredibly rewarding and I look forward to continuing as a volunteer in the future. Mediation is a valuable tool, and I have seen firsthand how it saves people so much time and money. Mediation also helps repair relationships in a way that a judgment from the court never will. Mediation is not for all cases, but when it does apply it is incredible to see how people can come together despite their history.



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I have also continued to work on the case management side of things. I have vastly improved in how I communicate with clients, in English and in Spanish. I have also improved my clerical skills, as well as my research and writing skills. I have gotten to work on a variety of projects with different team members that have improved all of the aforementioned skills. I can't express how thankful I am to PILI, CCR, and EJA for all their support this summer. Thank you all for changing me as a professional and a person!