



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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**Update 1:** I have gained invaluable experiences in the past few weeks. I am interning with Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A on their Preserving Affordable Housing Team. The team is very litigation focused: they spend the majority of their time in court actively representing their clients. I report to two supervisors as well as doing various intern projects. I'm learning a lot from drafting and writing legal documents to meeting and communicating with clients and opposing counsel. I have observed how significant housing court cases are, as they literally involve people's ability to sleep under a roof. Many of our clients are experiencing various hardships and our ability to assist them makes them feel less alone in their struggles.

One of our clients for example was being improperly evicted from her house. We were able to determine that there was not even a valid lease in the first place, so the landlord had no legal standing. When we first explained it to the client, she did not understand what we were saying. After simply explaining to her, however, that she won the case, she was overjoyed. I think this goes to show how often legal jargon and the legal system is inaccessible. I see my purpose as a lawyer to explain the legal system to those who cannot otherwise understand it. I've had a great first few weeks and am really excited to continue working.

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**Update 2:** I am really enjoying my time at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A. I have spent a significant amount of time in court, shadowing my supervising attorneys. I have always heard that a lot of litigation occurs outside the courtroom, but I never understood the extent to which this is true. Most of my time in the courthouse is not spent in the courtroom. Rather, I am observing my supervising attorneys speak and counsel their clients and negotiate with opposing counsel. Most of the cases I have observed have been settled.



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One of the most interesting aspects I have been observing is how my supervising attorneys counsel their clients. Most times, we are negotiating settlements so that our clients have the most amount of time possible prior to their eviction. There is a lot of tension here, as there is a lot at stake if our clients move forward to trial. Most times it is certain that they will have to vacate their homes, but proceeding to trial could mean that they would also have a money judgment against them, which could be ruinous. Balancing advising clients to settle versus proceeding to trial is something that I have admired in my supervising attorneys. Housing cases are very emotional because one of your most basic necessities is at stake. I admire my supervising attorneys for being levelheaded and as objective as possible given the circumstances. In these cases, I am unfortunately getting the sense that the outcome may not always be what is fair or right, because so often our clients have to protect themselves against uncertainty.

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**Update 3:** I am currently working on a case involving legal writing and research. I have just finished a motion to dismiss for numerous reasons, including the family exception rule. I initially wrote a memo to my supervisor about how the rule functioned and then was able to apply my memo in practice to the motion. This was very exciting for me, as it was my first time doing legal research outside the classroom. I tried to remember all the pointers and lessons I learned in my legal research and writing class and I think I was able to successfully write the motion. Nevertheless, I am eager to receive feedback and looking forward to amending the motion to be as effective as possible for our client.

All in all so far this experience has reaffirmed by interest in litigation and demonstrated my love of legal writing and research. I am very curious to see how the court will rule on this, as to me it seems to be a solid legal argument. I guess we will see, however, how it turns out.

I also researched the issue of illusory tenancy. This experiencing is expanding so much of what I learned in Property Law. I can not wait to return to campus to discuss with my Property Professor all that I have learned this summer. I find it so interesting how I took Property last semester and how this summer makes all that was theoretical, real. This so far has been a wonderful experience.

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**Update 4:** This past few weeks have been a bit slower. That being said, I am still getting work done and have been able to help my supervising attorneys with assignments, though I have not been to court in a while and I miss it.

I most recently have been working on an order to show cause. I thought this was very interesting, because as the respondents, we were filing a motion to compel the petitioner to



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comply with the settlement. I learned about the Civil Code 110(c) which basically grants courts widespread power to make sure that justice is served.

For instance, I've noticed that the last line of a bunch of sample orders I saw essentially stated that the court may have the ability to remedy the situation in whatever ways seem just and proper. I found this interesting, as it gives the court the deference to extend beyond what relief was requested so that the situation is repaired.

In all, I'm curious to know how all the legal documents I've been drafting turn out. Even though I may not know the client personally, when I am writing, I feel as though I know them and their story. I hope that what I wrote is sufficient to get them the outcome they were hoping for. I will definitely be following up with my supervising attorneys throughout the year to see how these cases turn out.

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**Update 5:** I have had a wonderful and deeply enriching experience interning with Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A this summer. Working with the Preserving Affordable Housing Team has been eye-opening, and I have gained invaluable insight into the nuances of housing law, particularly the intersection of litigation and advocacy for vulnerable populations. From drafting legal documents, researching case law, and observing litigation in action, I've seen firsthand how critical housing issues are to people's lives. The opportunity to directly impact clients who are at risk of losing their homes has been rewarding, and I've learned the importance of clear communication and empathy when dealing with such sensitive matters.

That being said, as the internship has progressed, I've found myself reflecting on where my true interests lie. While I greatly admire the work being done in housing law, I'm beginning to recognize that it may not be my long-term passion. I've learned so much about the importance of housing as a human right, but I also realize that there are many other areas of law that I'm eager to explore. This internship has helped me clarify what I'm looking for in my legal career: a field that not only engages me intellectually but also resonates more deeply with my personal interests and goals.

I'm especially grateful for the exposure I've had to litigation, as it has reinforced my interest in this area of law. However, I've come to realize that while I enjoy litigation, I'm interested in applying those skills in different legal contexts and want to continue to explore various areas of law. I want to explore how I can use my legal education to make a difference in other domains, particularly those that intersect with my academic background and personal interests.