



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

SUMMER 2024

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	Neighborhood Legal Services Program

Update 1: During my first week at Neighborhood Legal Services, I had the pleasure to receive training from The Public Interest Bar Association for the District of Columbia where we taught on how to do intake work, the area's resources, and organizations that work hand-in-hand. However, the most important thing that came from this training was that we were reminded of why we are doing public interest work this summer. For me, it brought me back to being a young child who felt powerless and hopeless as my family, and I went through economic insecurity and housing struggles. This summer, I have the pleasure of being a housing law intern at Neighborhood Legal Services where we have the opportunity to provide free legal services to those going through housing struggles. On my second day, I was provided the opportunity to sit in on housing conditions cases where we heard unfortunate and disheartening stories from real people who were living in poor housing conditions. This is so unfortunate because every person deserves to have a place that they call home. Thank you to Equal Justice America for providing me the opportunity to help people who are going through housing struggles, just like I did as a child.

Update 2: The past two weeks at Neighborhood Legal Services Program have been some of the most transformative weeks of my legal career so far. I had the opportunity to conduct my first in person intake and initial meeting with a client needing help with housing conditions and securing his section 8 housing. In the process of this client meeting, I prepared all of his intake documents, created his folder, and provided his copies to ensure that this process was as smooth as possible for him and my supervising attorney. We also learned that he had another problem that Neighborhood Legal Services Program could help him with, but within a different department. This was so transformative for me because I could see his stress and anxiety leave his face as we continued with our meeting and was able to provide him the assurance that he would have representation at his court hearing and that we would be able to help him with his problem. The reason I am so grateful to be in the public sector this summer is because I wanted the opportunity to help people and provide them a sense of stress relief. Seeing it firsthand with this client made it worthwhile. On top of this client meeting, I've done research into section 8



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housing, housing vouchers, and finding cases related to reclaiming real property. I am so grateful to Equal Justice America for this opportunity.

Update 3: The past month at NLSP has been the most transformative weeks of my legal career because of the exposure I have had to different topics within housing law and how it relates to public interest. Over the past couple of weeks, I have had the pleasure of meeting with my supervising attorney's client in his legal matters and how they have progressed. Unfortunately, his landlord has filed a Non-Payment of Rent action against him which NLSP will also be helping him with the matter. I have also helped draft advice letters, notice of appearance, temporary restraining orders, and discovery requests. The more time I have spent at Neighborhood Legal Services, the more I realize how incredible it is to be in the public sector and actively contributing to someone's life. While there are many things that I am still looking forward to learning about, I am happy with how this real-life experience has impacted my professional growth. This week, the client I have been helping draft and file paperwork for is having a temporary restraining order hearing done to help expedite the process in getting his air conditioning back on. Working with clients and gaining real experience has lighted a fire in me to really create a difference in their lives because that is all that genuinely matters.

Update 4: The past couple weeks at NLSP have been amazing because of the experiences I have had. Over the past week I had the honor of writing a motion to set aside a condition per a settlement agreement that was abused by a landlord. In this case, the landlord thought she could keep a tenant's ERAP payment while also evicting him, despite that going against the terms of the settlement agreement. I would be lying if I said it wasn't hard, but as difficult as it was with the time crunch, I knew that I had to focus on the bigger picture. I refused to see my supervisor's client be taken advantage of because the landlord erroneously accepted money that should have gone to him to secure new housing. The motion was filed on Friday so now we just wait to see whether my arguments were good enough to ensure that he either gets his ERAP payment or was able to redeem his tenancy. It's moments like this where I realize how essential public interest attorneys are to the legal system. It's also moments like this where I realize how grateful I am to be at NLSP, especially in the housing department. I am so grateful for the writing, research, and client skills that have been strengthened over the past seven weeks and I cannot wait to see where the rest of the program takes me.

Update 5: The last two weeks of my summer internship at NLSP were extremely impactful to me for various reasons. I helped potential new clients complete an intake with an attorney at one of our library clinics which are extremely impact to the members of the community because this allows them to discover the kinds of services we offer. I was also busy helping my supervising attorney complete a motion to dismiss for his client who is being wrongfully evicted by the landlord and not by her tenant because she is a subtenant. It was impactful to me to learn more rules from the DC RHA (Rental Housing Act) which explicitly protects her from sudden evictions. Having this opportunity to help my attorney do the research, create a rough draft, and be able to use a previous ruling regarding the exact same case really fueled me with so much love for the work I have been doing. It saddens me that many people are taken advantage of by their landlords, but I loved being able to advocate for them and protect my clients from these



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situations. No child should have to go through these kinds of situations, and neither should adults. Housing should be a fundamental right, especially because we are all human. My summer at Neighborhood Legal Services Program was the best summer employment I could have ever asked for. Not only were my supervising attorneys and fellow interns extremely supportive, but I was given every opportunity to work on all kinds of legal documents and legal problems that I don't think I would have ever been able to do anywhere else. NLSP is an incredible organization that deserves more funding, and one that I think truly goes above and beyond to help their clients. I am so glad that I am extending my internship through the fall semester, and I am so glad that this opportunity solidified my love for public service. Thank you, Equal Justice America, for the fellowship. Because of your financial support I was able to work on TROs, ERAP applications, attend hearings, do legal research, and get one step closer to being the attorney I've always wanted to be.