



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1:

I started at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) the week of May 28th and it's been an incredible experience! I'm currently working on three different cases on the subjects of food stamp processing, discriminatory policing, and access to children's mental health services. I've learned so much about the process of litigation and have had a chance to do research projects on different topics around discovery with two of my cases. The attorneys I've worked with have been warm and welcoming and provide supportive feedback on all tasks. I'm excited to see what's in store from here!

Update 2:

It is my 5th week at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and I can't believe my summer is halfway over. I've learned so much in the last few weeks and had a chance to do meaningful work that will impact clients. For one of the cases I'm working on, we interviewed an individual who spoke on their specific experience with police misconduct. It was a difficult conversation to have and since I was tasked with writing the intake notes for the session, I tried to write down as much detail as possible. The leading attorney in the interview did a great job of balancing the investigative aspect of the interview trying to get an understanding of the situation while also being empathetic and making sure the individual was comfortable and asking if they needed breaks. This was great to see in practice and I hope to continue learning and being able to conduct one of these interviews personally with as much care and consideration.

Update 3:

I am more than halfway through my internship and continue to learn so much in this process. I am currently working on a research memo detailing important case law from the 10th circuit around failure of police to investigate citizen complaints of police misconduct. I've also helped with document review for ongoing litigation and will be able to sit in on oral argument moots



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for an oral argument before the court in two weeks. It's been an exciting time, and I feel like I'm gaining great exposure to litigation in all different stages.

Update 4:

The last few weeks have been busy but fulfilling at the NCLEJ! I had the opportunity to sit in on two oral arguments moots regarding a public benefits case involving SNAP benefits, depo prep for another benefits case regarding children's mental health services, and continue work on a legal research memo involving police accountability! Overall, it has been a gratifying experience to do such in-depth work and have amazing support from junior and senior attorneys alike!

Update 5:

My final week at the NCLEJ was bittersweet as I've really loved the last 10 weeks at the organization and all the amazing things I had the opportunity to do. I've gained so much exposure to the world of economic justice, especially around welfare rights and public benefits litigation.

For our last week, NCLEJ had all interns read "Brutal Need: Lawyers and the Welfare Rights Movement," by Martha F. Davis, which maps the welfare rights movement from the 1960s-70s and NCLEJ's involvement in this important work. This was an eye-opening book, and it contextualized much of the current work we do at the NCLEJ to help better so many people's lives through poverty law and ensuring individuals have their basic needs met/holding the government accountable when they are not doing so. I continued to revise an important legal research memo at the intersection of racial justice and police misconduct, while also doing interviews and assisting attorneys with intake interviews on people's encounters with the police. People's accounts of their experiences were often very serious and traumatizing, so ensuring I went about asking questions in a trauma-informed manner was pertinent to both my role and making the individuals we interviewed feel more comfortable to share with us.

I also finished mapping a plaintiff's medical-history time to assist with deposition prep, which was a huge undertaking as there were numerous documents that need to be correctly tagged and filed to establish a narrative. Doc review was really important and be as meticulous as possible despite the amount of files I had to go through took a lot of time, but it paid off knowing my work was an integral aspect of the ongoing case.

Overall, this summer was everything I could have wanted and more, diving head-first into important civil rights work and learning more about a field of law, public benefits especially, that is not talked about enough given the millions of people across the country that are on benefits or desperately need them. Learning also the political aspects of the work and the ways in which much of the federal funding for poverty law was reduced in the 80s is an important historical context as many non-profits doing this integral work cannot take on all the cases they want to due to financial stress. I hope to one day be an attorney that can fight for the rights of others and help those who need it most through civil rights law, possibly doing public benefits work I experienced first-hand thanks to the NCLEJ!