



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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**Update 1:** I am now mid-way through my second week at the University of Chicago Law School Immigrants' Rights Clinic. The clinic manages a wide variety of immigration cases for our clients and other projects for members in the Hyde Park community, such as participating in asylum clinics that are hosted near campus. These first two weeks, I have spent my time working on drafting an asylum application for a client of ours. I was able to meet with her this week and learn more about her story. Additionally, I am drafting a prosecutorial discretion memo with the hopes of getting our client's current case in immigration court, dismissed. I have also been getting up to date on other cases our clinic is currently working on, alongside the other legal and undergraduate interns. Lastly, I am also working on a larger summer project in the background which involves a civil lawsuit our client is pursuing in response to civil rights violations perpetuated by police officers.

**Update 2:** Things have still been going so well at the Immigrants' Rights Clinic. Most recently we volunteered with a local organization in the Hyde Park community that connects us with asylum seekers who need help filling out their asylum applications. It was a very rewarding and meaningful experience as we were able to help about 7 families complete their asylum applications. If asylum seekers don't submit their application within one year of arriving in the United States, that avenue no longer remains available to them. Thus, these sort of community-based projects are incredibly helpful! Additionally, I have been sifting through hundreds of pages of evidence that we will be using for a deposition coming up within the next couple of weeks. I am looking forward to this deposition as I think it will be a great way to continue to learn more about the case as well as learn useful deposition skills from my supervisor. In addition to the substantial deposition and asylum work I am doing I am also working on drafting a few motions that we will submit to court for clients currently in removal proceedings. Some of these include things like a prosecutorial discretion memo and submitting a motion for a telephonic hearing.

**Update 3:** This has been my most busy week at the Immigrants' Rights Clinic since starting. Yesterday I sat in on my first deposition which was a great learning experience. Earlier in the week, I worked to



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compile all the exhibits we wanted to present to the defendant to make sure we got all the necessary information from him. I worked with my supervisor to go through more than a thousand pages of documents and figure out the best questions to ask during the deposition. Sitting in on the deposition was an incredible insight into more aspects of what litigation looks like outside of the classroom. Now that the deposition is over, I can turn my attention to finalizing the asylum applications from the community clinic two weeks ago. Once those applications are done, I will go ahead and file a FBI background for a client of ours as well file a motion for a telephonic hearing for another client's hearing at the beginning of next month.

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**Update 4:** I've had another busy week of work at the Immigrants' Rights Clinic. I most recently filed a couple of asylum applications pro se to ensure that these migrants satisfied the year deadline. According to US immigration, in order to file an asylum claim, the application must be submitted within one year of the individual arriving into the United States or else their ability to apply for asylum is barred. We have also continued to take depositions for the section 1983 federal lawsuit our clinic is working on. These have been really rewarding experiences as I have learned a lot about how to take a deposition and the skills that are needed to ask clear and concise questions to the witnesses. In the background I am also compiling a summary of detention conditions for a client of ours who is currently in solitary confinement. All the work at the clinic has been incredibly rewarding and I am sad that my time is soon coming to a close!

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**Update 5:** I am sad to share that I have reached the end of my summer internship at the Immigrants' Rights clinic. Over the past couple of weeks, I was lucky enough to sit in on two more depositions for our § 1983 lawsuit – one was virtual and the other one was in person. Seeing a virtual deposition was just as rewarding because it showed me that a different set of skillsets are required in order to make sure that the deposition also goes smoothly. Additionally, I was able to sit in on an asylum hearing with an immigration judge in Chicago. I had previously worked on this client's asylum application at the beginning of my internship and was able to meet her in person at this hearing. Our clinic had put together thousands of documents for her case to ensure that she had the best chance of winning. Luckily, our client was granted asylum and will be eligible to apply for her green card a year out from the decision. This was truly one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever been a part of, and it was so wonderful to see our client get her asylum granted. I finalized the summary of detention conditions for our client in solitary confinement and was also able to speak on the phone with him and my supervisor. The conversation was emotionally difficult as he is only allowed to speak with his attorneys for a few minutes a day, but it was meaningful to speak with him directly and hear how he has been feeling. I am extremely grateful for my time at the Immigrants' Rights Clinic. Speaking with friends of mine at other internships, I realized that I had a very substantive work experience getting to work on incredibly meaningful projects. I enjoyed working in a smaller work environment and getting to work directly with such impressive clients! I have always been and will always continue to be so passionate about immigration policy in the United States and this internship solidified my desire to always make sure I work in that environment as I think it's a part of the legal system that continues to need fervent advocates.