



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: At CWC, my primary responsibility is to assist in the development and implementation of various projects aimed at improving water quality for disadvantaged communities in California. My typical day involves extensive research on water policies, legal frameworks, and community impacts, as well as drafting reports and educational materials. I also have at least one check-in call every three days with various committee/team members to receive feedback or additional insights regarding ongoing research work.

One of my main tasks has been to conduct comprehensive research on state and federal water policies. This involves analyzing existing laws and regulations, such as the State's Antidegradation Policy and the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program, to understand their implications for local communities. My research helps identify gaps and opportunities for advocacy, ensuring that CWC can effectively push for stronger protections and more equitable access to clean water. For instance, I recently completed a detailed analysis of the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) program. This research involved dissecting the regulatory requirements and assessing their impact on small, rural communities that are often disproportionately affected by nitrate contamination.

My findings will contribute to CWC's advocacy efforts, aiming to secure better enforcement and support for these vulnerable populations. As I continue my internship, I am eager to take on more responsibilities and deepen my engagement with the communities we serve. I look forward to conducting field visits to understand on-the-ground realities and further contribute to our advocacy efforts.

Update 2: Critical Funding Needed for CA Water Infrastructure.




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The State Water Resources Control Board's 2024 Drinking Water Needs Assessment reveals an urgent need for \$15 billion to address drinking water challenges in California. Climate change is putting increased pressure on water resources, disproportionately affecting low-income and rural communities. An equitable Climate Bond is essential to secure safe water access for all Californians. Support for frontline communities is crucial.

This is one key aspect of my research work at CWC. Read more from Community Water Center: https://lnkd.in/gy_AR6H5


Update 3: Accessing and utilizing federal funding for water initiatives remains a significant challenge for many communities across the United States. The key to overcoming these challenges lies in empowering grassroots organizations with these resources to address local water issues effectively.

During a session at River Network's River Rally, Celina Mahabir from @Community Water Center and @Kirsten Shead from Milwaukee Water Commons discussed practical strategies for navigating federal funding. They highlighted how to ensure funds reach the communities most in need and advance long-term, impactful solutions. The session also touched on the role of philanthropy and shared early successes from federally supported projects.

Update 4: It's a 5-year milestone of the SAFER program in Porterville! 

The initiative has drastically improved drinking water access, reducing the number of residents served by failing systems from 1.6 million to 700,000. Projects funded include new wells, infrastructure upgrades, and connections to larger urban water systems. Despite the successes, as Susana De Anda, Executive Director at the Community Water Center, reminded us, "the work is not finished." We must collaborate with impacted residents to ensure lasting solutions.

As a fellow of the Equal Justice America 2024 Summer program, I'm proud to support this vital work. <https://lnkd.in/gcTT4FeA>

Update 5:  I'm excited to share my enriching experience as an Equal Justice America Fellow at the Community Water Center (CWC) during the summer of 2024. As an LL.M. student of environmental law at University of California, Los Angeles - School of Law, this fellowship allowed me to delve deeply into research and writing, particularly focusing on sustainable groundwater management and clean water initiatives in California.



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One of my primary projects involved a thorough analysis of California's anti-degradation policy for water quality. This culminated in a comprehensive report detailing the policy's implications, covering both the legal framework and practical impacts on water quality standards. This work was crucial in supporting CWC's advocacy efforts, laying a foundation for promoting stricter enforcement and protection of water resources.

I also researched various California environmental laws and policies, which was instrumental in advancing CWC's clean water initiatives. By examining legal precedents and current regulations, I identified gaps in the existing framework. My findings led to policy recommendations aimed at strengthening water quality protections and ensuring equitable access, particularly for underserved communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

The friendly and welcoming atmosphere at CWC significantly enhanced my experience. The supportive environment fostered open communication and collaboration, making it easier to tackle complex legal and policy issues. This collegial atmosphere also facilitated the exchange of ideas and constructive feedback, which was invaluable for refining my work.

Additionally, being an Equal Justice America fellow provided essential support and recognition, enabling me to fully immerse myself in critical research and writing projects at CWC.

Looking forward to continuing this vital work!