



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

SUMMER 2024

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Jaclynn Bostic-Clarke
LAW SCHOOL	University of Virginia
ORGANIZATION	Legal Aid Justice Center

Update 1:

The first few weeks of my time at LAJC were busy, but fruitful. In my first week, I was able to join a People's Coalition meeting, where I got to meet Charlottesville natives and discuss tactics to defend the community against harmful policing practices and the expansion of the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail. I also got to attend my program's annual planning meeting in Richmond, VA. We played games, discussed how to approach conversation about abolition and reform, and worked on leadership development through skits. During my second week, I got to sit in on a legal call and take notes for my supervising attorney. It was powerful to have gotten some hands-on experience by talking to women at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (FCCW) about the lack of adequate healthcare at the facility and how it has taken a toll on their lives. This experience was invaluable.

Update 2:

Within these past two weeks, I was able to conduct legal calls with clients, table at the One Stop Shop in Charlottesville, and go to a 'Know Your Rights' session at the Blue Ridge Juvenile Detention Center (BRJDC). While all of these experiences were great, the "Know Your Rights" session at BRJDC was the most monumental experience for me. At the detention center, we spoke to the youth about their 4th, 5th, and 6th amendment rights, especially when it comes to dealing with the police. It was awesome to see the boys recognize that they do have rights, even when it seems like they don't, and they have the power to protect themselves. While I've never really interacted with incarcerated youth, I really liked that I was able to have this new experience and talk to the youth about their perspective in dealing with police, being arrested, and getting incarcerated. This experience has influenced me to want to go into youth advocacy in the future.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Update 3:

Two weeks ago, I was able to visit the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women (FCCW) with my attorney supervisors. There, I was able to conduct interviews and meet some folks to gather information on whether their healthcare needs were being adequately met, as part of determining if the facility has been complying with the settlement agreement. This experience was shocking; hearing what these women go through and how little control they have over their healthcare was absolutely heartbreaking. I appreciated being able to have candid conversations with the women and that they trusted me with their story. This experience only intensified my desire to help those who truly cannot defend themselves. The biggest takeaway from this experience was understanding how much our criminal justice system dehumanizing people, and how much work needs to be done to fix this issue. People deserve health care, and as a future attorney, I hope to be able to advocate for this basic human right.

Update 4:

As my summer at LAJC begins to come to an end, I'm reflecting on the skills I've picked up on throughout the summer. Because I went straight to law school after completing my undergraduate degree, I didn't get the same amount of exposure as some of my peers who were able to work at law firms before deciding to go to law school. Working as an intern has allowed me to hone important litigation skills, such as interviewing, investigation, legal research, and producing legal memoranda. Even if my career interests shift in the future, I am so excited to apply the valuable skills I've learned thus far. For example, I've been working on a research project on jury fines and fees in Virginia and how they affect indigent people. I'm expanding on this research by comparing Virginia legislation on jury fees to other states. I'm excited to produce this research and help my supervising attorneys further understand the practice of imposing jury fines on those who have been through the criminal legal system.

Update 5:

Wrapping up my summer internship was a bittersweet experience. Reflecting on this summer, I learned a plethora of legal skills, made invaluable connections with fellow law students, and was better able to figure out what I'd like to do in the future. As a person who went straight from undergrad to law school, this internship was a great way for me to establish important litigation skills, such as client intake and interviewing, legal research and writing, and the intricacies of class actions suits. Working on the class action was such an integral part of the internship. Much of my work consisted of ensuring that the defendants remain compliant with the terms of the settlement agreement. To make sure they were compliant, my supervising attorneys and I would visit the prison and speak with clients to make sure that their healthcare is up to par, that conditions inside the prison are safe, and that clients that require chronic care are getting the care that they need. Another aspect of my internship was working with a local coalition, the People's Coalition. Every other Wednesday, we'd have meetings with the group to discuss problems plaguing the city such as the overinvesting of funds into the city's police and jails. The most pressing issue this summer was the fact that the city would pour \$73 million dollars into



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

expanding the local jail, meanwhile important parts of the city, such as the schools, were not getting the funding they needed. I observed the meetings as my supervisor often provided legal advice and helped with getting FOIAs for the group. I loved being able to see a different form of community lawyering and it was great to see how involved LAJC was in the community. Finally, one of the last events I was able to help out with was the expungement clinic in Martinsville, Virginia. My fellow interns and I drove down to support the attorneys with filing expungements. There, we signed clients in, worked with the commonwealth attorneys to sign off on expungements, and were truly able to connect with the clients to help them achieve their goals. This summer experience was like no other, I am constantly grateful for the opportunities that its presented me.