



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	The Bronx Defenders

Final Reflection:

This summer, I interned at The Bronx Defenders, a public defender organization located in the Bronx which aims to radically transform how public defenders serve their clients and communities. To do so, the organization employs a holistic model of defense. Essentially, this means that a client does not have access to a criminal defense lawyer, but other types of lawyers, including family, immigration, and civil defense attorneys as well as social workers and investigators. This model recognizes that individuals involved in the criminal legal system are often impacted by multiple systems of oppression.

I worked with the Civil Action Practice, which is split up into two teams. Some of the attorneys are focused solely on receiving Right to Counsel cases, meaning that they are seeing the life of a housing court case from start to finish. The Generalist team, which is where I worked, received clients through referrals from other practices. Oftentimes, attorneys jumped in the middle of a case to support a civil problem that has arisen. These attorneys work primarily on housing court cases but also support with employment and police misconduct matters.

Previously, I've had experience working with a Right to Counsel team, but the way the Generalist team functions and the types of cases they tend to receive were fairly new to me. My first assignment as an intern was to support with an employment appeal for a client who had been placed on a state employment exclusion list. The office had never filed such an appeal, and I had no way of knowing if the appeal I was writing was on the right track, but I did my best to research, find relevant case law and secondary sources, and work closely with the client to represent their story correctly.



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I also was able to write an opposition to a motion to restore that I was able to argue in housing court. The results were favorable to our client, and the restoration was denied. The facts and circumstances were odd, and I was able to delve into written and oral advocacy that was entirely new to me. I was also able to work closely with a number of clients and provide support for them as they navigated the housing court process. Overall, I had a truly wonderful experience working with clients and my supervisors at The Bronx Defenders. I am so grateful to Equal Justice America for their support this summer.