



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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I am writing to share a reflection on my fellowship experience working at the Family Justice Law Center (FJLC), serving in lieu of my final required updates. Spending my fellowship immersed in impact litigation and systemic advocacy on behalf of families has been a transformative chapter in my legal education, shaping my understanding of how lasting reform is achieved and reinforcing my commitment to public interest law.

At FJLC, my work centered on impact litigation across all phases of the legal process. I had the privilege of engaging directly in the ground-level work required to challenge systemic failures in the family regulation system. This included conducting witness interviews, reviewing evidence, drafting affidavits, and writing legal memos. I also had opportunities to assist with plaintiff recruitment and attend case conferences with federal court judges in the Eastern District of New York (EDNY). Through all of these experiences, I gained an understanding of how complex civil rights actions move through the federal judiciary.

While the legal research and drafting were deeply engaging, the most profound aspects of my internship were rooted in the people we served. Working alongside families navigating the overwhelming mechanics of the family regulation system brought the human cost of systemic injustices into focus. Hearing the stories of potential plaintiffs (typically families torn apart or destabilized by state intrusion) highlighted both the devastating realities our clients face and their remarkable resilience. Listening to their experiences transformed legal concepts into urgent calls for accountability. The assistance we provided, whether through securing proper procedural due process or laying the groundwork for broader structural relief, aimed not only to address individual harms but to push back against systemic overreach.

This fellowship taught me invaluable lessons about the realities of public interest law. Most notably, I learned that change is rarely swift. From initially identifying a systemic flaw to building a viable case, recruiting plaintiffs, and ultimately fighting to change the law or secure



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justice, it is a remarkably long and arduous process. Impact litigation is undeniably an uphill battle. I also learned that it is a collaborative one. Protecting civil rights and shifting entrenched institutional practices takes an entire village—dedicated attorneys from multiple organizations, interdisciplinary experts, social workers, and, above all, courageous clients willing to share their stories to protect others.

Witnessing the dedication of the advocates at FJLC and the resilience of our clients has solidified my dedication to pursuing a career in family defense and systemic reform. I am deeply grateful to Equal Justice America for making these summer experiences possible and for supporting the critical work of championing families who too often go unheard.