



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

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Update 1: I'm two weeks into my internship, and I've already gained a great deal of valuable knowledge and experience. TakeRoot is an organization that is deeply committed to its mission and model, and I've had the opportunity to engage with that work firsthand. While I have not yet led a conversation with a client, I have been able to observe client interactions by sitting in on a legal clinic hosted by one of our partner organizations. This experience gave me insight into the ways legal services are provided and how attorneys communicate with clients. In addition, I have spent significant time reviewing asylum applications, which has helped me develop a deeper understanding of the asylum process and the level of detail involved. I also had the opportunity to create a country conditions annotated index, a task that was entirely new to me. Although it was challenging, the guidance of my supervisors and reviewing numerous examples helped me complete it successfully. I am also currently working on my first Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) case. Much of this work has involved a steep learning curve, but the challenges have been rewarding, and I feel that I am learning something new every single day.

Update 2: Over the past two weeks, I have had the opportunity to fully immerse myself in learning the many intricate details that make up U.S. immigration law and practice. I quickly realized that even the smallest procedural requirements can have a significant impact on a client's case, making careful attention to detail essential. One area I focused on was preparing work authorization applications, where I learned how to accurately complete the forms, identify the required supporting documentation, and understand how the accompanying forms work together. As I became more familiar with the process, I was able to work on multiple applications simultaneously, which helped me build confidence and efficiency.



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This week also brought the significant Temporary Protected Status (TPS) court ruling, reminding me that immigration law is constantly evolving and that legal developments can immediately affect thousands of people's lives. Processing this news alongside my colleagues highlighted not only the legal implications of the decision but also the emotional impact on immigrant communities. Together, we discussed what the ruling could mean for our clients and community partners and began thinking through the best ways to support them moving forward. These experiences have reinforced both the complexity of immigration law and the importance of informed, compassionate advocacy during times of uncertainty.

Update 3: One of the most meaningful experiences I had during my internship was working on a client's entire work authorization application for both the client and their family. I had the opportunity to be involved in the process from start to finish, including gathering all of the required documents, organizing the materials, preparing the application, and ultimately submitting it to USCIS. Being able to see every step of the process gave me a much better understanding of what immigration representation actually looks like in practice.

This experience also showed me just how bureaucratic and complicated the U.S. immigration system can be. There are countless forms, supporting documents, and procedural requirements that can make even a relatively straightforward application feel overwhelming for families trying to navigate the process on their own. It made me appreciate how stressful and confusing immigration processes can be for clients whose ability to work and support their families often depends on these applications.

Most importantly, the experience taught me the kind of lawyer I hope to be, someone who makes the process easier for clients, not harder, and who helps guide them through difficult systems with patience, empathy, and clarity.

Update 4: Working in immigration law right now has been both difficult and really meaningful. As an intern, I have been lucky to learn from some incredible lawyers who, even during such a tough time, are not giving up or backing down. Instead, they continue to show up for their clients and are constantly thinking of creative ways to help not only the people they represent, but the immigrant community as a whole.

Interacting with clients is not always easy. Immigration cases can be stressful, emotional, and complicated, and sometimes there are limits to what we can do. But I think that makes this work even more important. Even when the work feels difficult or overwhelming, I would rather be doing this work than not doing it at all. Our immigrant communities deserve people who care about them, who are willing to fight for them, and who genuinely believe in creating a better



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world for them. Being able to contribute to that, even in a small way as an intern, is something I really value.

One new thing I have learned since my last update is how to file a motion for guardianship, which is an important part of the SIJ process. Learning about this has helped me better understand how the different parts of the SIJ process fit together and how much work goes into helping a young person obtain protection. I am grateful that I get to keep learning new things and not only focus on one part of immigration.

Final Reflection: Looking back on my internship, one of the biggest things I am taking away from this experience is a deeper understanding of what it means to be an advocate. Before beginning this internship, I understood immigration law primarily through my coursework and my interest in pursuing this area of practice. However, being able to observe and participate in the work firsthand gave me a much more complete understanding of the responsibility that comes with representing someone whose future may be shaped by the outcome of a legal process.

Throughout this experience, I learned that being an effective immigration attorney requires much more than simply understanding the law. It requires patience, attention to detail, creativity, and, most importantly, an ability to meet people with empathy during some of the most stressful moments of their lives. I saw how complicated legal systems can place enormous burdens on individuals and families and how meaningful it can be to have someone who is willing to help them navigate those systems. This experience reinforced my belief that legal representation is not only about reaching a particular outcome but also about ensuring that clients feel supported, informed, and treated with dignity throughout the process.

I was also reminded that immigration advocacy does not exist in a vacuum. The law is constantly changing, and legal and political developments can immediately affect entire communities. Watching attorneys continue to adapt, problem-solve, and advocate during uncertain moments showed me the importance of remaining committed even when the work is difficult, and the answers are not always clear. It made me appreciate the importance of lawyers who are willing to continue showing up for their clients and communities, particularly when doing so feels most urgent.

This internship has also helped me think more seriously about the kind of lawyer I want to become. I want to be knowledgeable and prepared, but I also want to be someone who makes difficult systems feel less intimidating and isolating for the people who have to navigate them. I hope to approach my future clients with patience, empathy, and honesty while remaining committed to advocating for them as effectively as possible.



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Ultimately, this experience has strengthened my interest in immigration law and reminded me why I wanted to pursue public interest work in the first place. I am leaving this internship with a greater appreciation for both the challenges of this work and the people who continue to do it. More importantly, I am leaving with a stronger sense of purpose and excitement about continuing to learn, grow, and eventually contribute to this work as an attorney.