



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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LAW SCHOOL	Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law
ORGANIZATION	Catholic Charities of Philadelphia, Immigration Legal Services

Update 1: I am excited to share that I have been awarded an Equal Justice America (EJA) Legal Services Fellowship to support my work at Catholic Charities of Philadelphia, Immigration Legal Services.

I began the internship with orientation, where we learned about habeas petitions, naturalization, the organization's refugee project, intake procedures, and the client database. After orientation, we were assigned clients. I am going to be working on my first cancellation of removal case, which is a form of relief from deportation. I started by reviewing a successful brief for a cancellation of removal case. Then, I met with my supervisor to prepare for our client meeting. We scheduled the appointment, discussed the questions and documents we should request from the client, and identified initial legal research for the case.

Thank you to Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law for preparing us for our internships and to Equal Justice America for funding my internship.

Update 2: The highlight of the past few weeks was attending a naturalization ceremony at the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, where 53 people took the Oath of Allegiance and became U.S. citizens. Since the ceremony took place shortly after Flag Day, we also heard from several prominent speakers who welcomed the new citizens, shared their own families' immigration stories, and spoke about the history and significance of some of our nation's most famous flags. It was a bright moment in the midst of a challenging time in immigration work.

In terms of casework, I've continued working on my first cancellation of removal case, which is



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a form of relief from deportation. I also began working on some naturalization (citizenship) cases and my first voluntary departure case, which is when a client requests permission to leave the United States voluntarily rather than undergo removal proceedings that could potentially result in a formal deportation order—an outcome that can have serious long-term consequences. Through these cases, I've improved my ability to read and interpret legal documents, practiced communicating in Spanish, and gained a better understanding of how these legal processes work in practice.

Update 3: Over the past few weeks, I have been very busy working on cases. I have continued working on my first cancellation of removal case, a form of relief from deportation. I reviewed documents our client provided in response to our request, identified additional information we need, and prepared a game plan for moving the case forward, which I reviewed with my supervisor. We now have a meeting with the client scheduled for this upcoming week!

I also began working on a brief for an asylum case, which has given me the opportunity to become more familiar with important immigration cases and further strengthen my legal research and writing skills.

Lastly, I wrapped up the work I was assigned for my first voluntary departure case, which is when a client requests permission to leave the United States voluntarily rather than undergo removal proceedings that could potentially result in a formal deportation order—an outcome that can have serious long-term consequences.

Update 4: Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to observe a Master Calendar Hearing at a Philadelphia Immigration Court. Although I had been to Immigration Court in New York a few times before, this was my first experience in Philadelphia. The other interns and I spent several hours there, and overall, the hearing went smoothly. One of the highlights for me was realizing that I could follow along with most of what was happening in the courtroom. It was an encouraging reminder of how much my understanding of immigration law has grown over the past year.

As my internship comes to a close, I have also been trying to wrap up the work I was assigned on my cases. For example, I am nearly finished with the asylum brief I have been working on. I submitted my first draft to my supervisors for review yesterday. I am now incorporating their feedback and putting the finishing touches on the brief. I look forward to submitting the final product!

Final Reflection: Looking back, I am very grateful that I chose to work at Catholic Charities of Philadelphia. Although I came into the internship with a strong background in immigration, I



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had the opportunity to work on many new types of cases and assignments. For example, I worked on my first asylum brief, my first cancellation of removal case, and my first voluntary departure case. The most rewarding part of these assignments was seeing my work come together because it showed me how much I learned about immigration law and drafting motions and briefs throughout the summer.

I also attended my first Master Calendar hearing in Philadelphia immigration court. This was one of the highlights of my internship because it showed me how much I have learned over the past year through my Immigration Law course, my participation in my law school's Immigration Clinic, my work as a Research Assistant for my Immigration Law professor, and this internship. I was able to follow along with most of what was happening in the courtroom, which is something I would not have been able to do before.

Another highlight was attending my first naturalization ceremony. Seeing how excited everyone was to become U.S. citizens was a powerful reminder of the impact immigration advocates can have on their clients' lives and gave me even more motivation to continue doing this work in the future.

Lastly, I had the opportunity to network and learn from a very supportive group of immigration attorneys, DOJ representatives, and undergraduate and law school interns. I look forward to staying in touch with them in the future.

Overall, I am taking a lot away from this internship, including a deeper understanding of immigration law, greater familiarity with immigration court proceedings, stronger legal research and writing skills, and meaningful relationships with others in the immigration field. Most importantly, this experience reinforced my interest in becoming an immigration lawyer after graduation.

Thank you to Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law for preparing us for our internships and to Equal Justice America for funding my internship. If you would like to help Equal Justice America fund law students like me to work at civil legal aid organizations, please consider making a donation.