



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: I am just beginning my second week of work with The Oregon Law Center. While I am only one week in, I can already see how important this work is for our clients. This clerkship is my first position in the legal field, and I feel especially honored to gain this experience with a legal aid organization. The first case I am working on involves an employment status misclassification. The potential client was a cleaner for a vacation rental company. They were assaulted at work by a maintenance worker. When they reported the incident to their manager, the manager told them that's why they like to hire older people for the cleaning roles, so they don't have to worry about who they hire for the maintenance positions. The potential then received a phone call shortly after saying they were too much of a liability for the company, and they were fired. I am writing a memorandum and researching if our potential client was misclassified as an independent contractor, meaning they would have no title VII protections. If they are an employee, they may take action against the company for a retaliation claim.

Update 2: I am hitting the halfway point of my clerkship this week. I have really enjoyed every project I have worked on, and I feel so privileged to work with the attorneys at Oregon Law Center. I finished my first assignment that I mentioned in my previous post, a memo about potential employee misclassification. I am grateful to have used what I learned in Legal Writing to help a real person who needs the help of OLC. Now, I am working on three projects. The one that is most intensive is about a client receiving in-home care paid for by medicaid. She has severe dementia and Parkinson's, which have only progressed since she started receiving care in 2014. This year, her in-home care hours were cut by 6 hours, and we will be representing her and her family in an administrative hearing to contest the change in hours. For this assignment, I was able to sit in on a meeting with her family, which was my first time meeting a client. Now, I am going through evidence to see if any of her needs changed that would allow a reduction in



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care. After I complete this, I will write a hearing memo in preparation for the administrative hearing that will hopefully occur in my time at OLC.

Update 3: I have gotten a reputation around the office for doing spreadsheets, which I really enjoy. Currently, I am working on a spreadsheet of different labor laws in Oregon, and their requirements for posting a notice of worker's rights, as well as any action that can be taken if these rights are violated. I also worked on discovery for a special education case, where a child was essentially kicked out of school for behavioral issues that were a manifestation of his disability. For this project, I made a timeline of events leading up to him being kicked out--and his mom has a good case that we are working on placing with a private attorney for capacity issues. In addition to this, I finished a policy memo this week on the possibility of a statute that governs when a civil proceeding can take place remotely. My undergraduate major was in policy analysis, so this felt very familiar. I looked to other states to see if any such statutes exist, and spoiler, they do not. However, many other states have Judicial Rules about this topic, so I made recommendations based on those.

Update 4: I'm in my last week of work. This has been such an amazing experience, and I really feel like I am making a difference. In the past two weeks I have: been to an expungement clinic for unhoused people, written a memo about compelling "confidential" public records in discovery, researched femicide in Peru, and am now working on a memo about compassionate release. The expungement clinic was my first client intake experience; I learned how to calmly ask questions that may be triggering for people and got more insight into the barriers unhoused people face. The most difficult project I have had so far was the public records memo. I knew nothing about public records, and the class I struggled the most in was civil procedure. I spent a fair amount of time researching discovery in Oregon and the rules of evidence. When I would get frustrated with this project and my struggles with civil procedure, I would remind myself of why I am doing this project--Oregon State Police have been assisting I.C.E. by giving them access to the National Law Enforcement Data Service. I.C.E. has been using this information to identify people, and OSP is giving this information by choice. My worksite is requesting public records on the queries that have been searched on NLEDS, and OSP is claiming that information is confidential pursuant to a public records statute. However, I have found that just because it is confidential in this statute does not mean that it cannot be compelled in discovery. Overall, this summer has been very influential for me and what type of law I want to pursue. I am very grateful for all the attorneys I have been working with and getting to spend a summer in Portland.

Final Reflection: I finished my summer clerkship a couple weeks ago, and I still feel so grateful for the experience I had at Oregon Law Center. I was able to work on a variety of different projects and develop skills that I will take into this next school year, and into my professional



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career. The reason I decided to go to law school was to help people who are left behind in the justice system. This summer, I was able to accomplish that goal, and I am excited to return to classes in the fall to learn more about how to help my future clients.

In the 8 weeks I spent at OLC, I got to assist in discovery, prepare for an administrative hearing, research policies for our lobbyist division, and help so many people. While I didn't have as much client interaction as I had hoped for, I did get to help conduct an expungement clinic for unhoused people. Through this task, I was able to (hopefully) clear charges from a client's record that were a barrier to her search for housing. I say hopefully because she still had an open charge and if that charge is dismissed then her record can be expunged. I wasn't expecting to work on policy related matters this summer, but I really enjoyed doing so. My bachelors degree was in public policy, and it was very rewarding to use this background in my role at OLC. A substantial area of work for the clerks this summer were cases involving I.C.E. I had the opportunity to aid our attorneys in obtaining records requests concerning I.C.E. and I felt incredibly honored to work on this case and help protect people in Oregon.

My work this summer allowed me to figure out a path to where I see myself in the legal field. I am very grateful for all the experiences I had this summer, and all the attorneys I got to work with. I feel accepted and at home in legal aid and can't wait to continue this work after I graduate. This summer has led me to seek more experience in education law, which is the field I will be completing an externship in this Fall.