



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: Today, I start week 3 of my 10-week internship at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC) in San Francisco. These past two weeks have been amazing. From taking the ferry into downtown SF to get to the office and to networking with other Bay area immigrant nonprofits at an annual retreat, my time at the ILRC has been so fun and exciting. I have learned so much already regarding legal research and immigration policy. On the day-to-day, I attend various meetings regarding policy changes, proposed regulatory changes, updates on USCIS memos, and so much more. The ILRC has various working teams ranging from asylum, immigrant youth, removal defense, enforcement, policy, crimmigration, advocacy, and more. I am a part of the crimmigration, removal defense, and policy teams. My first assignment was research on the surveillance tools and databases that ICE uses to run and enforce its deportation machine and agenda. It was frightening to see the money and tech investments that DHS acquires in order to surveil the population. My current assignment is a legal research assignment. My supervisor asked me to research case law on motions to reopen in absentia removal orders, which are orders against people who fail to attend their hearings in immigration courts. I check-in with my supervisor weekly to discuss capacity, assignments, and summer objectives. I am excited to continue to build my legal research and writing skills.

Update 2: This past week, I was able to attend the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) National Conference in San Diego. I was a student volunteer at the conference and was able to sit in on various workshops and panels and network with lawyers, law students, and paralegals. ILRC was also at this conference, which was nice because I saw my colleagues. They had a booth where they showcased their manuals, and some staff attorneys presented on various panels. I was grateful to the ILRC for allowing me to attend this conference during my summer internship with them. They believed this was a great opportunity for me to network and learn. I had a great time learning from attorneys about best practices during this difficult time for immigration law. At the ILRC, I am working on a couple of research assignments. I just finished



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researching the parole process for Ms. L class members and I am working on research regarding conditions at detention facilities and legal opportunities for TPS holders. I enjoy the work that I do. Not only do I get to improve my legal research skills, but I also receive feedback on my legal writing. I received great feedback from my supervisor who appreciated my work and encouraged me to try various writing styles. I am excited to keep learning from him and all the attorneys at the ILRC.

Update 3: The past two weeks have been challenging in a good way. I have two major assignments due days a part that pushed my legal research and writing skills. My biggest assignment this summer has been working on a public comment for a new federal regulation from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The new rule codifies an adjudicating officer's discretion to deny immigration petitions if there are issues with signatures. The comment I wrote discusses how a denial of an immigration petition, which means that the applicant loses their filing fee and must submit again with a new fee, is a harsh penalty for a non-substantive issue. Writing this comment was difficult because I wanted to impress my supervisors and showcase my writing skills. However, I struggled with organizing the comment and making strong arguments backed by research and law. Although I felt at times inadequate working on this project, I gave myself grace. I recognize that I am only a law student who is continuing to practice and grow. This summer is the perfect time to ask for help, make mistakes, get constructive feedback, and grow my legal research and writing skills. With support from my supervisor, I was able to draft a comment which is set to be submitted to the federal register.

Update 4: This summer, the ILRC hosted weekly "Lunch and Learns" for all of their interns. There are 3 law clerks and 4 undergrad interns with the ILRC this summer. Each "Lunch and Learn" has its own dedicated topic/subject with a different team member hosting the meeting. We tend to gather on Tuesdays or Wednesdays during the lunch hour to learn about the work ILRC is doing. Last week, the Lunch and Learn gathered with the Central Valley team, which spoke about the work they do in the Valley, the challenges the Valley faces, and the collaboration that takes place to support legal services in the area. As someone who is from LA, I knew a little bit about the underrepresentation that happens in the Valley but to learn and see the jarring numbers, such as the ratio of immigrant lawyers to residents, it put into perspective the need for public interest attorneys in areas where there aren't many legal services. The previous week, we heard from the Texas team, which shared a little bit about what is happening in Texas, the challenges they face there, and the work the ILRC is doing in San Antonio, Houston, and Laredo. This meeting was infuriating because the staff attorney in Houston explained the collaboration that is occurring between ICE and Houston Police. I feel for the immigrant community in Texas, but I am proud to be with an organization this summer that is supporting advocacy efforts in places that desperately need it. I was inspired by both the Central Valley and Texas teams for holding it down in these areas.



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Final Reflection: My ten weeks at the ILRC were amazing! I was able to join a team of professionals with various backgrounds and experiences in the immigration law field. I learned from some experts in immigration legal space. This summer, I moved to the Bay from Los Angeles to join ILRC. I had a great time exploring the Bay area. My commute into the office involved taking a ferry into San Francisco which was awesome. I had two other law clerks with me from UC Davis Law. I formed great friendships with them, and I am so glad to have met them.

My work this summer involved legal research and writing. Working with my attorney supervisor, I received research assignments from various attorneys at ILRC. The assignments ranged from researching the surveillance tools that ICE uses to target immigrants, motions to reopen in absentia removal orders, detention conditions in California City, FOIA exemptions, and NACARA for TPS holders. My biggest assignment this summer was drafting a public comment for a new federal regulation from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The new rule codifies an adjudicating officer's discretion to deny immigration petitions if there are issues with signatures. The comment I wrote discusses how a denial of an immigration petition, which means that the applicant loses their filing fee and must submit again with a new fee, is a harsh penalty for a non-substantive issue. The comment was posted on the Federal Register. I had never written a public comment before, so I learned a lot about the process. Another assignment I worked on involved filing Public Information Act requests to Houston police departments regarding their collaboration with ICE. It was horrible to see the data on how HPD collaborates with ICE and supports this administration's deportation machine. Overall, I did valuable work and improved my legal research and writing skills.

There were many experiences at the ILRC that made me hopeful for the future. I joined the San Francisco Immigrant Legal Defense Collaborative on their annual retreat. I met folks from various immigrant orgs in the Bay Area doing the work on the ground. It was great to talk to and network with folks who are passionate about this work and continue to fight the good fight, especially during these times. The ILRC also hosted a career panel for us that featured attorneys from various legal orgs and public defenders who support immigrant defendants. It was great hearing about the journeys of these professionals and seeing the various career paths that are available for law students interested in immigration. I met so many cool people this summer!

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