



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: It has been an eventful first two weeks interning at the Ohio Justice & Policy Center with the support of Equal Justice America. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to speak with multiple Cincinnati judges, watch bail hearings, watch OH HB338 testimony, and get started on work regarding human rights in prison. So far, I have examined hundreds of pages of medical records, familiarized myself with way too many cases of human rights violations in prison, and discovered the never-ending demand for the type of work OJPC is committed to.

Throughout orientation, it was drilled into our minds the importance of recognizing the humanity of our clients, especially in the language we used. Many people do not understand the stigma and harm imposed by their word choice-- "incarcerated individual" instead of "inmate," or "justice-impacted person" instead of "felon." These are simple changes in everyday vocabulary, and may not seem like much of a difference at all to any other person, but to our clients, and all justice-impacted people, it establishes trust, community, and acceptance. Most importantly, it keeps people from feeling written off.

Update 2: I cannot believe that my summer legal internship with the Ohio Justice & Policy Center is already halfway over. OJPC is dedicated to serving incarcerated and justice-impacted populations by providing free legal counsel and representation throughout all stages of the criminal justice system.

This summer, I've had the opportunity to dive into OJPC's Human Rights in Prison Project, where I've conducted research into 8th Amendment concerns regarding the provision of hormone replacement therapy in prison, examined thousands of pages of medical records, and read letters requesting our assistance.



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This past week, I had the opportunity to attend the Court of Appeals' Intern Day for the legal interns in Cincinnati, as well as watch eviction court proceedings. Both were incredibly eye-opening, and I am so grateful for the ways this summer has built upon my legal education. I am equally grateful to Equal Justice America for the support they've provided in this endeavor.

Update 3: It's time for my third update with Equal Justice America! It has been such a privilege to have their support during my time at the Ohio Justice & Policy Center this summer.

Since my last update, I have continued researching 8th Amendment provisions regarding hormone replacement therapy for incarcerated individuals, as well as examining various state laws regarding reinstatement procedures for attorneys who were disbarred or suspended as a result of substance abuse disorders for a potential advocacy campaign. The week concluded with a visit from the Ohio Safe at Home program, which is an address confidentiality initiative from the Ohio Secretary of State's office. I had never heard of this type of program before but was pleasantly surprised to learn they are implemented in almost every state.

Update 4: It's my second-to-last week interning at the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, and I am so grateful for all the opportunities they have provided during my time here! On Wednesday, we were able to tour both the Ohio Supreme Court and the Ohio Statehouse and meet with Ohio House Representative Latyna M. Humphrey. It was a great opportunity to learn more about the work of a representative and how the legislature can impact and be impacted by OJPC's work.

This truly has been such a wonderful internship, and I could not have done it without the support of Equal Justice America.

Final Reflection: My time at the Ohio Justice and Policy Center has officially come to a close. I am grateful for the people who welcomed me, the attorneys who took the time to teach me, the experiences that challenged me, and, most importantly, the opportunity to better understand the kind of lawyer I hope to become

When I began this internship, I was a shy and uncertain first-year law student. I had spent my first year learning the foundations of legal doctrine and developing the skills necessary to succeed in law school, but I had limited opportunities to see those skills in practice. I am proud to say that I am ending this summer as a more confident, curious, and grounded second-year law student.

During my time at OJPC, I participated in a myriad of activities, all introducing me to various aspects of the criminal justice and legal systems. I had the opportunity to observe and discuss foundational skills that attorneys must continually develop, including depositions, case analysis,



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legal research, client advocacy, and the process of evaluating the facts and circumstances surrounding a case. As someone who has always been a hands-on learner, these experiences were invaluable. There is something fundamentally different about reading about a deposition in a textbook and then watching an attorney prepare for and conduct one. Similarly, there is a difference between learning about legal analysis in the classroom and being asked to apply that analysis to real people, real circumstances, and real consequences. This summer allowed me to take what I had learned during my first year of law school and begin seeing how those lessons translate into actual legal practice.

Furthermore, this summer reaffirmed my commitment to practice prison rights and pursue public interest. Throughout the summer, I encountered stories that challenged me, saddened me, and reminded me why this work matters. One morning, we attended eviction court, where I listened as individuals testified about the difficulties they faced securing and maintaining housing, paying rent, and navigating systems that can often feel impossible to access. Later, through my work with OJPC's Human Rights in Prison Project, I read and assessed letters and applications describing the horrific conditions and experiences incarcerated individuals were facing every day.

I leave this summer more confident in my abilities, more certain about the work I want to pursue, and even more rejuvenated in my pursuit of a legal education. I am excited to see where this next year of law school takes me, and I am even more excited to continue learning how I can use a legal education to advocate for the rights and dignity of incarcerated individuals.