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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: It has been two weeks since I started as a legal intern in the Bankruptcy Department at NYC Legal Services. I have 8 clients whom I am assisting in filing. The past two weeks have included training and reaching out to clients. Throughout the summer, I will be using English and Spanish to communicate with my clients, as six of my eight clients either do not speak English or speak very little. I began reviewing the documents that I have received from each client, and in the following weeks, this will become much more of what I spend my time on. Already, I have expanded my knowledge drastically about bankruptcy, pro bono legal services, and Spanish in a working legal context, so I am excited to reflect in a few months to see the overall growth of these areas.

Update 2: My first month at NYC Legal Services has already been more than I could have imagined. The learning curve has been steep, but after talking to peers and observing how they primarily observe at their internships, I'm happy I cannot relate to that. I have begun filing petitions for a few clients and have started to get a better grasp. Each meeting I have with my clients uniquely impacts me. Recently, I had a client who turned my entire day around, and I was so close to rescheduling because she came an hour late as I was leaving for the day. The decision to stay and meet with this client genuinely made my week and allowed me to see better the impact of the work I am doing. I am becoming more confident in my Spanish, bankruptcy knowledge, and overall future as a lawyer. Additionally, this past week, I attended the EJA reception and was able to connect with peers and alumni about their work and the impact EJA has had on their lives.

Update 3: As I move into my second month at NYC Legal Services, I am starting to see how each case stretches my thinking differently. Most of my work has continued to center on



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bankruptcy filings, and I have grown more comfortable guiding clients through the process from intake to petition, especially in Spanish, which no longer feels like an extra layer of effort but simply part of how I work. Recently, I was also assigned a student loan case, which has pushed me into research mode in a way my other cases have not. Rather than walking a familiar path, I have spent hours digging into the specific regulations and precedents that apply, which has been a welcome challenge and a reminder of how much of this work depends on careful, patient research before any action is taken. It has also given me a deeper appreciation for the legal staff I work alongside, who move fluidly between filing routine petitions and untangling more novel legal questions. Outside of casework, I continue to value the relationships I am building with clients, each of whom reminds me why this work matters beyond the paperwork. I am also noticing my own growth, not just in legal knowledge, but in patience, organization, and communication. As the summer continues, I am looking forward to seeing this student loan case develop and to continuing to build on the bankruptcy skills I have been sharpening since week one.

Update 4: As my fellowship comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on how much has changed since I first walked into NYC Legal Services eight weeks ago. What began as training sessions and tentative client calls has grown into something I could not have fully anticipated. This past month brought a milestone I had been working toward all summer — finalizing and filing my first two bankruptcy petitions. Seeing those cases move from initial intake to completed filing was one of the most rewarding moments of my summer. Behind each petition was a client whose circumstances I had come to understand deeply and knowing that the work I put in directly contributed to their path forward.

Perhaps the most memorable experience of the entire fellowship was visiting the Eastern District Bankruptcy Court. Walking into that courtroom grounded everything I had been doing in a way that no office meeting could. Watching proceedings unfold in a space where the legal work I had been part of all summer actually lives gave me a new sense of the stakes and the purpose behind it all.

I leave NYC Legal Services more confident in my legal skills, my Spanish, and my commitment to public interest law. This fellowship has shown me that meaningful legal work does not wait until after law school — it is available now, and it matters now. I am deeply grateful for every client, colleague, and case that shaped this summer.

Final Reflection: When I first walked into NYC Legal Services, I did not fully know what to expect. I knew I would be working in the Bankruptcy Department, I knew I would be using my Spanish, and I knew it was an opportunity I did not want to waste. What I did not know was how much this summer would shift the way I think about the law.



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The first two weeks were mostly getting oriented, learning the process, and reaching out to clients. I began with eight clients and spent those early days grappling with each unique circumstance. Six of my eight clients spoke little to no English, which meant that Spanish was not just a bonus skill but a necessity. At first, navigating legal conversations in Spanish felt like an added weight. By the end of the summer, it felt natural. That alone was a growth I did not anticipate when I started.

As the weeks went on, the work became more real. I stopped just reviewing documents and started actually moving cases forward. By the end of the fellowship, I had filed six petitions. Each petition represented a client I had met with multiple times, whose financial situation I had come to understand in detail, and whose case I had built from intake to filing. There is one client in particular I think about often. She arrived an hour late to a meeting when I was packing up to leave for the day, and I almost rescheduled. That meeting ended up being one of the best moments of my entire summer and reminded me exactly why this work matters beyond the paperwork.

I also had the chance to work on a student loan case, which pulled me in a completely different direction than bankruptcy. It was mostly research at this stage by digging into regulations, reading through precedents, trying to understand a legal landscape I had not spent the summer immersed in. It was humbling in a good way. It reminded me that being a good lawyer is not just about knowing the answer but about being willing to sit with a question long enough to find it. Working alongside attorneys who move fluidly between routine filings and more complex legal questions gave me a clearer picture of what it actually looks like to practice law at a high level while still putting clients first.

I leave this fellowship more prepared than I arrived, in every sense. My legal knowledge grew. My Spanish grew. My confidence in my ability to connect with clients, manage a caseload, and do meaningful work grew. I also attended the EJA reception and was able to hear from peers and alumni whose paths reminded me that this kind of work leaves a mark on you long after the summer ends.

More than anything, I leave certain that public interest law is where I belong. This summer showed me that the work is hard, the need is real, and that I am capable of showing up for both.