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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: I've just finished up my first few weeks at the National Housing Law Project and I'm absolutely loving it. It's so wonderful to be in an environment where everyone is extremely passionate about one of my favorite topics - housing. I believe that safe, stable, and affordable housing is one of the key foundations in life, and my work here at NHLP hopefully will help that either become or stay a reality for low-income Americans.

I feel like I've already learned so much in such a short time! Most of my past housing advocacy work has been very local, so I'm used to getting in the weeds of state security deposit law or eviction proceedings. However, I wasn't really all that familiar with federal housing programs that support so many low-income Americans. Now, I'm getting immersed in that world every day at NHLP, though I'm kicking myself for not taking Admin Law earlier in my law school career. I'm getting to bring that local advocacy experience to a wider, national stage, and it's just so exciting. Knowing that, every day, I get to assist on projects that will help low-income Americans all over the country gives me so much joy and I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of projects I'll be able to tackle throughout my internship.

Thank you so much to NHLP for taking me on this summer, and also to The University of Texas School of Law and Equal Justice America. I wouldn't be able to do this work without their assistance, and for that I'm incredibly grateful.

Update 2: I want to discuss an important issue that I've been helping out with: the Office of Management and Budget proposed rule that would affect the funding for every federal agency, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This rule is sweeping in scope, seeking to cut funding for all federal programs that would contradict the administration's agenda. Parts of this rule would limit the federal government's ability to support programs that



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require international cooperation, increase voter participation, and involve “DEI” or “gender ideology,” among many others. It would make it more difficult for agencies to secure funding for many different projects, hampering their ability to function as they were designed.

When it comes to HUD, the impact of this rule would be disastrous for those who receive federal housing assistance. Most of the country is facing more and more issues when it comes to securing safe and affordable housing, these families the most. During a housing affordability crisis like we are experiencing, disrupting funding for these essential programs would immensely harm millions of Americas most vulnerable.

Fighting policy like this is an important aspect of NHLP’s work, and I’ve been happy to have gotten the opportunity to contribute to their essential efforts in opposing rules that would decrease access to affordable, safe housing for those living in the most precarious situations. Thank you so much to Equal Justice America and the University of Texas School of Law for enabling me to participate in this work; I’m so grateful for this opportunity and am doing my best to make the most of it.

Update 3: I’d like to highlight some of the most important things I’ve learned throughout my time at the National Housing Law Project -- both legal and nonlegal. Firstly, I’ve been getting used to working in a remote environment, which is something I thought I’d have no problem with when I accepted this position. However, there’s a few challenges that come with working remotely that I hadn’t really expected, especially when it comes to getting to know colleagues and making connections. Luckily, I’ll be heading to the Housing Justice Network conference in the fall, so I’ll get to see my amazing supervisors and mentors at NHLP as well as make new connections with legal aid attorneys, community organizers, and other folks who have the same passion for housing that I do.

Secondly, I feel that I’ve learned so much about housing law that I didn’t even know I didn’t know! Through working with NHLP, I’ve been able to get experience in so many areas of housing law and policy. A lot of my experience in housing advocacy has been incredibly local, so I was not super familiar with federal programs and how to advocate for many of America’s most vulnerable tenants. I’m excited to take this knowledge with me in the future and combine it with my more local experience to be the best housing advocate and policymaker I can be. Working with NHLP and seeing the kind of work they engage in has informed me how I want to start my career in housing policy work and I’m so grateful. I know what I want to do and have created a path to do it.

Update 4: I’d like to talk about some of the amazing opportunities I’ve been able to have by working with NHLP and being an EJA summer fellow. This past week, I was able to travel to San



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Francisco to see the NHLP office in person (and meet some of my wonderful co-workers in person!) and attend the San Francisco EJA Summer Reception, where I was able to meet some of my other fellows and supporters of the fellowship program. I am so grateful that I was able to meet other law students that are so passionate about public interest law and making real change in part due to their EJA Fellowships.

One of the other fellows I spoke with at the reception was very excited when I mentioned I worked at NHLP - they used the Green Book basically every day in their eviction defense practice! Having this conversation reminded me of the importance of the work we do at NHLP. We don't just do policy advocacy and research -- we also provide materials that on-the-ground housing attorneys use on a day-to-day basis. Having the opportunity to attend this reception reminded me about how important the work I'm able to contribute to is to many attorneys and their clients across the nation and has renewed my excitement to continue.

Final Reflection: I'd like to reflect on the summer and what I was able to accomplish during my time at NHLP. To be perfectly honest, I was incredibly nervous heading into my internship - I was about to be working with some of the foremost housing experts in the country with decades of experience, and I hadn't even finished law school! Also, I'd never really worked in a fully remote environment before, and I was nervous that I wouldn't be able to make the kind of personal connections with my co-workers that I would in an in-person environment. Luckily, though, my first week at NHLP made those worries disappear. Everyone was so kind, welcoming, and worked really hard to make all of the clerks feel included even in a virtual environment. Big thank yous especially to my supervisor, Marie Claire Tran-Leung, for providing such great mentorship and allowing me to participate in so many important projects, and Stacey Tutt, for personally guiding and mentoring all of us clerks.

Throughout the summer, I was able to work on a large variety of different projects, improving my legal research and writing skills with the mentorship of several NHLP attorneys. Additionally, I was able to attend many different meetings and working groups that gave me new perspectives on numerous issues throughout the housing world. Some of the projects I'm most excited about, like an explainer for tenant organizers in several different federal programs about their legal rights to organize, directly impact tenants and provide them with resources to better understand their rights and know how to utilize them. I also was able to work directly on some of the important comments NHLP has made in the past months surrounding the Trump administration's dangerous new rules that would jeopardize so many of the most vulnerable Americans' access to safe and affordable housing. Perhaps most excitingly, I was given the opportunity to be involved in some legislative advocacy related to one of my favorite topics (based on some of my past posts, it's not too hard to guess), which is tremendously exciting. I'm so happy that, in such a short time, NHLP gave me the chance to create real positive change in



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the world of housing advocacy. This experience has only made me more excited for my future career, and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

Lastly, I am so grateful to be attending the Housing Justice Network's conference this November! I'll be able to meet more of my colleagues in person and more housing advocates across the country. If you'll be attending, I'd love to say hi (and definitely come to the PropTech panel)! Thank you so much to NHLP for giving me a scholarship to attend the conference - I am so excited about this opportunity and am looking forward to seeing everyone there.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of Equal Justice America's summer fellowship and Texas Law's Summer Public Service Program. I want to give my biggest thanks to these programs and their supporters for making all of these fantastic experiences possible! Thank you so, so much - I will strive to build on these opportunities to build a career that is worth the investment.