



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1:

It has been two weeks since the beginning of my internship with the Public Law Center (PLC), and I have learned so much as part of the Impact Litigation Unit. The scale of the case work and the number of individuals involved make it an invaluable experience to be a part of. So far, I have completed several research memos and am tasked with preliminary research for an amicus brief. My tasks surround housing law, specifically housing development. This is a new field for me, yet learning it has been a welcome challenge.

It was not until I immersed myself in my assignments that I realized just how impactful housing development, specifically low-income housing, is for members of a community. By supporting low-income housing development, the Public Law Center is advocating on behalf of those facing barriers to homeownership.

Naturally, the Impact Litigation Unit is working closely with the PLC's Housing Unit on this case, allowing me to learn from an even greater number of legal professionals than I would have otherwise. I am excited to continue my work under the guidance of such experienced attorneys, and can't wait to see how my responsibilities evolve over the coming weeks.

Update 2:

Part of my internship involves numerous visits to the state courthouse and several court observations. These have allowed me to get close and truly see who stands to benefit from the Public Law Center's work in the community. Being in the Impact Litigation Unit means that the cases I am assigned to are extensive and take a long time to progress. While I am not afforded everyday opportunities to perform intakes or client interactions, I am thoroughly invested in these court observations. It provides the human connection to my assignments because so often



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those who find themselves in court suffer from substandard housing conditions or a lack of affordable options.

Listening to the backgrounds of these fellow Orange County residents is what drives me forward in my work. Housing development and affordable housing options are practices that need to be safeguarded to ensure that every member of the community has the opportunity for home ownership.

While the cases I have been assigned to are progressing slowly, they are making progress nonetheless. Hopefully soon, I will have the opportunity to witness the oral argument of one particular case, a chance to see true advocacy take place.

Update 3:

The latter half of the summer is fast approaching, and with it, is my time interning at the Public Law Center. My first week seemed like just yesterday, but the work has kept me plenty busy. The work pace has certainly increased; what started as research memos has now turned into drafting amicus briefs and preparing for oral argument. While the work can be difficult, having an amazing group of attorneys to learn from has made this experience truly special. As my time and experience at PLC grew, so too did my responsibilities. One example are my assignments to draft and edit briefs and documents that are sent to both the courts and opposing counsel. I am grateful to have learned so much about the various stages of litigation. These experiences are the kind that I will take with me further into my legal career.

Amidst all this new chaos stemming from court deadlines and filing dates, I find it important to remind myself what all this work is for. It can be easy to lose sight of that when you're solely focused on completing assignments. But reminding myself that my tasks are contributing towards the safeguarding of low-income housing keeps me focused. More than that, it helps me appreciate this amazing opportunity to both develop my skills in litigation while supporting public-interest work.

Update 4:

My last two weeks at the Public Law Center in the Impact Litigation Unit have been extremely engaging and the ideal way to conclude the summer. There were significant developments in the two major cases I have been working on. In the first, I helped review and draft a finalized amicus brief and application. This meant extensive proofreading with quick fixes for any last-minute issues. I admit, it was somewhat exciting to have that burst of adrenaline when making those final edits with an imminent deadline. In the end, the brief was successfully submitted, just in time to turn my attention to the next case.



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For the second case, PLC recently had an oral argument in the appellate court. Part of the preparation process was to organize a moot court for my supervising attorney, who is the one set to argue. On top of that, it was my responsibility to investigate the presiding justices and the questions they would likely ask, at what time, and how frequently. I did so by watching videos of their previous oral arguments and compiling and synthesizing all my observations into a comprehensive report.

Looking back, it was amazing to be a part of the Public Law Center. I truly felt like a part of the team; working together, coordinating efforts, all to navigate tight deadlines and unexpected developments. This was the most exciting part of the summer and made all the hard work incredibly rewarding. I count myself lucky that I was able to see the culmination of my work, if at least for one stage of a very long litigation process.

Final Reflection:

Reflecting on my time as a summer law clerk with the Public Law Center and as an Equal Justice America Fellow, several experiences come to mind.

First, the people around me were among my greatest resources. The attorneys and legal professionals at the Public Law Center were always open to answering my questions. They fostered a collaborative environment that emphasized growth, learning, and professional development. Even more so, my Equal Justice America mentors, Mr. Bill Hoerger and Ms. Ellen Lake, were equally invaluable. They each have decades of invaluable legal experience, which they generously shared with me and took a genuine interest in my story and pathway into the legal field. I was unsure what to expect from EJA's mentorship program, but I am incredibly grateful that I accepted the opportunity to participate.

Second, I learned firsthand just how long and arduous litigation can be. This by no means came as a surprise; it was one thing to learn about how a case progresses in court from my civil procedure course. It was another to see just how many steps and how many unexpected developments can prolong the process. A prime example was when I needed to research and develop responses to an appellate justice's potential disqualification. Conflicts of interest were a briefly covered area in my doctrinal course; in practice, it felt like a colossal undertaking. Fortunately, no complications arose from this situation; my research and recommendations remained as valuable safeguards, and the appeal progressed to oral argument. Litigation is a long process; it was only after working as a summer law clerk that I realized just *how* long that process can be.



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Third, I learned the importance of counting the small victories. Given the length of the litigation process, especially in cases as complex as the ones I was assigned to, I found it necessary to draw inspiration from the little wins. These included: finding a particular answer to a nuanced procedural question or submitting a comprehensive research memo and subsequently receiving praise from my supervisor. Because of my limited opportunities for direct interaction with the clients we represented, these accomplishments encouraged me and provided a meaningful sense of purpose.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Equal Justice America. Its mission to encourage and support young legal professionals in public interest is one I deeply admire and respect. Accepting such a position in my hometown might not have been financially feasible if not for the support of EJA. Their support gave me the financial freedom that allowed me to work on litigation that benefits my community and neighbors, making the experience both personally and professionally fulfilling. For that, I am profoundly grateful to Equal Justice America and to have received their support as an EJA Fellow.