

Equal Justice America
End of Fellowship Letter

This Summer I had the incredible opportunity to work for the New York Legal Assistance Group. I was part of the Domestic Violence Clinical Center within the Family Law Unit. I was assigned my own case load, which enabled me to gain a tremendous amount of experience in direct representation of victims of domestic violence. My responsibilities included interviewing clients, going to court to advocate for them, researching various aspects of Family and Immigration Law. Because I speak several languages, I had the added benefit of being assigned clients who do not speak English.

One case in particular proved to be very rewarding. The client, who only speaks Spanish, had been in an abusive relationship for years and was looking to get a final order of protection. While she had a temporary order of protection, her abuser kept violating it and she was still terrified of him and what he might do. Since he repeatedly refused to settle and consent to a final order, we prepared to go to trial. I spent countless hours interviewing my client and prepping her for the trial. Specifically, I drafted her direct testimony and practiced it with her several times. It was the first time that I had to draft a legal document in English and practice it with a client in Spanish. The biggest challenge in that case was finding ways for my client to understand how the court system works here. She had trouble with following my directions and limiting her answers to the question she was asked. She was so concerned that she would not be able to give her entire story that it was difficult to make sure she would not get cut off by objections. In the end, after hours of practice and explanations, she learned the rules and performed very well. It was very rewarding to see how she came to understand what she had to do in order to reach the best result. The trial is still ongoing, but I loved the part that I took in it.

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