

## MARIA JOSÉ PADILLA

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Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am very grateful for the Equal Justice America summer fellowship that allowed me to intern at LatinoJustice PRLDEF (“LJP”), one of the leading civil rights organizations in the country. LJP’s work includes impact litigation as well as educational and policy initiatives that dramatically improve the lives of Latinos.

It was extremely rewarding to assist Latinos in a variety of ways. I handled many intakes where people were treated unfairly particularly because of their immigration status. Many faced housing and employment discrimination and were afraid to take legal action because of their legal circumstances. It was gratifying to inform them that their immigration status was not an obstacle in reporting these injustices and seeking the remedies they sought.

I also performed legal research and drafted memorandums on various civil rights issues. For instance, currently only local and federal New Jersey prisons allow inmates to call internationally. I wrote a persuasive memo that will hopefully assist in changing New Jersey legislation to allow NJDOC inmates to communicate internationally with their families abroad.

Moreover, I really enjoyed connecting with the community and presenting to health advocates on the medical benefits immigrants are eligible for. Providing this information is vital in helping improve the quality of life of Latinos and their families.

The LJP internship was more than I had expected. I was able to participate in informative brown bag lunches on topics such as post-graduate fellowships and federal clerkships. I also took part in educational outings where I was able to meet New York federal and state judges to learn about their career paths and their roles in administering justice.

I would not have been able to experience all these wonderful opportunities without Equal Justice America’s financial support. Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Maria Jose Padilla  
Rutgers School of Law-Newark  
J.D. Candidate 2017