



Summer 2018 EJA Fellow



Name: Elizabeth Alva-Rajakumar

Law School: Loyola Law School, Los Angeles

EJA Fellowship: Public Counsel, Immigrants' Rights Project

Entry 1: Week of 6/11/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

Over the past few weeks I have worked with Public Counsel to conduct intakes and support community members who are eligible for asylum. I am humbled and inspired by their strength and optimism despite enduring horrific violence and persecution in their home countries. I am privileged to do this work with the support of Equal Justice America, which helps expand the access to justice by funding law student internships with direct service legal organizations.

Entry 2: Week of 6/25/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

The media has focused a lot on covering news regarding immigration recently. Over the past few weeks at Public Counsel, I have worked [with] those seeking asylum to help see if they are eligible for relief. Listening to the stories of the trauma they endured in their home countries and seeing the heartbreaking images on the news constantly reminds me of how necessary it is for everyone to be an advocate for immigrant communities. Migration is beautiful and at the end of the day, we are all immigrants. It is the most humbling and rewarding experience to work with those whose only wish is to remain in this country and be safe and happy. I am so thankful to be able to do this work with the support of Equal Justice America.



Entry 3: Week of 7/9/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

At Public Counsel over the last few weeks, I have helped community members file their adjustment of status applications to obtain their green cards. This step in the immigration process is such a remarkable time because it represents gaining the security and stability that comes with having permanent residency. These community members have sacrificed so much to be able to live and stay in this country. They deserve nothing but respect and admiration. It is one of the best feelings to be a part of such a special moment.

Entry 4: Week of 7/23/2018

#EJAFellowUpdate

Over the past few weeks at Public Counsel, I have helped domestic violence survivors with their Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitions. I am incredibly thankful for everything that I learned throughout this process. My mentor always says that “We are not our client’s saviors; they have been saving themselves long before we arrived and they will continue to do so long after we are gone.” At the end of the day, the clients end up saving us. I truly believe this. These women exemplify unimaginable kindness, love, and resilience despite facing atrocious horrors. I am incredibly grateful to have worked with them.

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August 1, 2018

Equal Justice America
Building II – Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Attn: Dan Ruben, Executive Director

Re: Elizabeth Alva-Rajakumar

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I had the pleasure of supervising Elizabeth Alva-Rajakumar in her summer externship at Public Counsel, the largest pro bono law firm in the nation. Ms. Alva-Rajakumar externed in Public Counsel's Immigrants' Rights Project for 10 weeks and made significant contributions to our work and the project overall.

Ms. Alva-Rajakumar came to Public Counsel with a working knowledge of immigration law, which was extremely helpful to our staff. In just 10 weeks, she conducted a number of asylum intakes, undertook critical research in response to rapid changes in immigration law, prepared an application for legal permanent residence on behalf of a U visa holder and asylee, assisted a survivor of domestic violence with her Violence Against Women Act petition, and helped finalize a U visa training manual that we will use for many years to come.

Ms. Alva-Rajakumar is a joy to work with. She is passionate about the work she does, has a strong work ethic, and is able to work well individually and in teams. She treats our clients with the utmost respect and produces excellent work product. It has been a pleasure to supervise and mentor Ms. Alva-Rajakumar and I have no doubt that she will one day make an excellent immigration attorney.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at gamato@publiccounsel.org or 213-385-2977 x 232. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Gina Amato

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