



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Natalia Meade

Law School: AU - Washington College of Law

Fellowship: ABA ProBAR

Entry 1: June 11, 2019

This summer, I was generously selected as an Equal Justice America Fellow, and am currently working ABA ProBar. I have been here for almost two weeks. It is the only organization in the area that provides services to detained adults in immigration proceedings.

During my time here, I have worked on an asylum case, observed court proceedings, and attended a “Know Your Rights” presentation. The presentations are also known as ‘charlas,’ wherein ProBar provides essential information to detainees. Adult detainees receive documents from immigration court in English and ProBar provides translations. Currently, I am working with my attorney supervisor to release a minor who is in adult detention.

In 2018, Texas was the state with the most people in immigration proceedings. 79% of people in ICE detention in Texas were unrepresented. ProBar helps detained adults at Port Isabel Detention Center, where there is an asylum denial rate of 81.1%. Despite these statistics, research has shown that representation makes it 500% more likely to win in immigration court. With over a thousand detainees and only a team of 12, the burden at ProBar is high. However, the opportunity to help one person makes this work matter. I am so grateful to be an addition to the team and look forward to the rest of the summer!



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

LEGAL SERVICES FELLOWSHIPS



Entry 2: July 3, 2019

Thanks to all my family and friends that have reached out to donate to Equal Justice, I don't have the words to say how much it means to me.

In the past few weeks, I have been working on a multitude of cases, not all successful. I'm struggling with what to say because I've seen and heard so much from detainees. Their desperation is palpable. Their stories are haunting. The news has been a loud backdrop to my work: the conditions in the processing centers and the deaths of mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters.

With July 4th around the corner, I have been thinking of the privilege to be a citizen of this country. This summer has taught me the true meaning of freedom and how lucky I am to have it.





Entry 3: July 19, 2019

One of our clients just won asylum! Despite this, not all of our clients receive the same result. As the only organization that provides legal services to these individuals at Port Isabel Detention Center, we cannot help everybody.

I am thankful that my partner and I have been able to collect intakes, conduct research, and facilitate credible fear interview preparation. The research portion of our summer has been especially important because immigration law is changing every day. The ways in which a lawyer can help these indigent clients is limiting. Lawyers don't erase traumatic experiences. Lawyers don't control laws that Congress or the President implements. However, lawyers can challenge these laws and propose change. Lawyers can fight injustices and advocate for their clients.

And you. You can help by funding legal services organizations or consider donating to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers, may continue.

Entry 4: August 2, 2019

That's a wrap! Just two days ago, I found out my pro se client passed his credible fear interview. We sat down together to fill out his application for asylum and for the first time, I left the detention center with a full heart.

I am attaching this picture to show that this experience could not have been possible without such a great team. These are the people that dedicate their lives to serving others. It has been a privilege to witness their passion and dedication. This will be a summer I carry with me for the rest of my life.

I am so grateful to Equal Justice America and ProBAR, who made this summer opportunity possible for me. I hope that others can have a similar experience.

