



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Alyssa Rao

**Law School:** Boston College

**Fellowship:** Greater Boston Legal Services

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### Entry 1:

As some of you may know, I was selected as one of this year's Equal Justice America fellows, and am now two weeks into my internship with the Family Law Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services. I am so excited to be working alongside inspiring advocates in representing survivors of domestic violence in their family law matters. So far, I have been assigned four cases, and have been drafting motions and conducting legal research on their behalf. I also conducted my first client interview last week, and will be helping this woman file for divorce, child custody, and obtain a 209A abuse prevention order. The work that I am doing here is incredibly fulfilling and is made possible, in part, by my fellowship with EJA.

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### Entry 2:

In the last few weeks, I've gotten more familiar with my clients and their cases, and I have taken a deep dive into the Discovery process of the Family and Probate Court systems. While some of the subpoenas I've drafted have been fairly standard, I also had to do some investigating to find out who owned the Boston food truck employing one of the opposing parties in my cases. After calling the Boston Office of Small Business Development, I was able to send out my document requests and carry on with my case.

So far, my work at GBLS has given me an amazing opportunity to advocate directly with clients and do the standard work that a Legal Services Attorney would do every day, and it is possible in part by my fellowship from EJA.



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### Entry 3:

As the second half of my internship in the Family Law Unit at GBLS begins, I was just assigned my first immigration case. I am in the process of helping my client apply for immigration relief through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The tedious work of filling out my client's immigration forms makes me appreciate organizations like GBLS even more. Without legal aid organizations, survivors of domestic violence would go unrepresented through the civil and immigration court systems. GBLS and organizations like it help to mitigate the effects that poverty and domestic violence have on the most vulnerable, and I am so happy to be spending my summer doing this work.

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### Entry 4:

As my summer internship with GBLS comes to a close, I have had time to reflect on the wonderful experiences that I have had in the last three months. I was given the opportunity to meet with clients, draft and file motions with the court, conduct legal research, and work on an active immigration case. But legal skills aside, I also met some of the most impressive people, both clients and advocates, who inspired me all summer long. My fellow interns (pictured here) showed dedication and resilience in their brief summers with GBLS. I met attorneys who, despite the emotional toll of legal aid, come in to the office every day eager to represent survivors. And I met survivors who, despite the many obstacles in their way--poverty, racism, trauma--take steps within the legal system to fight for their own safety and that of their families. I am so thankful to have worked with such an incredible organization and am excited to continue working with some of these clients with GBLS in the fall.

