



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



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Fellowship: Greater Boston Legal Services, Asian Outreach Unit

Entry 1:

My first two weeks at the Asian Outreach Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services was quite rewarding. I was able to understand the different issues specifically faced by the Asian community, some long-standing while others increasingly pressing due to the current administration. From legal research to client intake and follow-up to doc review, I was given substantive work since day 1. Aside from my assignments, I especially enjoyed the many conversations I had with my director about different matters AOU is involved with and the historic and policy reasons why the unit is involved. These eye-opening conversations really made me understand why I am doing what I am doing. To me, legal concepts are no longer words written on a fancy page of a law school textbook. They really become the means that I employ to try to meet the ends.

Entry 2:

I had quite a busy week. Work has been slowly picking up pace. This week I mainly spent my time doing client intake and document review. I also worked on a general guideline for writing pardon letters and am also in the process of working with someone to draft a pardon letter for our client. I took the opportunity to do a document review because I had been hearing the term being thrown around for a long time without actually knowing what it meant and it is something many first-year associates may encounter. For me, the challenging part is to figure out what exactly the document was as I do not know much about immigration law and some documents look like they do not belong anywhere in my timeline or table of contents. It can be a little tiresome after a while as it gets mechanical, but I am glad I got to experience it as it is what attorneys have to do and I wanted to see if I could do it. Before I submitted the timeline the next day, I wanted to use it to see if it is clear enough for someone who has not done hours of document review and I ended up doing several edits.



I also went through a wage and hour training with the labor and employment unit, learning about major state and federal law for this issue. I did not know before that if you are a manager at a restaurant you cannot share the tip pool. It is also the case that the Massachusetts Wage Act is the major law and federal law does not have much momentum in this area.

This week, the excitement of starting a new internship has died down a little bit. I felt a lot more relaxed at work and could actually focus more on the assignment itself instead of worrying about messing it up. I did miss an email my director sent me to email a client, but well, I guess we all make mistakes.

Entry 3:

This week I had a very interesting research assignment. Originally, I was asked to research whether our clients situation satisfy the requirement of legal guardianship under derivative citizenship under the current law so that we can help him obtain citizenship. As I was researching, I discovered that the current law seemed to be inapplicable to him as he was beyond the age limit. I was not quite sure about what I found out at the time therefore I emailed my director and asked her opinion about my findings. As it turned out, I was right, but that also meant I had to find out whether there was a plan B, whether the previous statute before the amendment would apply to him. Since his stories were so complicated, it was quite difficult to decide whether he would fit under the previous statute as different circuits also had different interpretations of the language. The first circuit chose to remain silent over this issue, which was both difficult and exciting, difficult in the sense that I would not be able to provide a definite answer and exciting because I could argue either way. I ended up looking up marriage law in client's original country just to see if there is a clearer definition. The project is still ongoing and I have not found a definite answer yet, but I am happy with what I have found so far.

I could not believe that five weeks have passed since I started my internship. I remember that I was worried about whether I would do well and whether I would have enough work and experiences to talk about during interview. Now I just need to figure out which assignment among the 10 I would like to talk about.

I really appreciate the opportunity to intern at the Asian Outreach Unit as it taught me a lot more about the kinds of problems and prejudices the Asian community is facing in Boston and it made me realize there is still a long way to go. Sometimes it can be frustrating that someone who does not really know or understand the community can form a strong and biased opinion based on the limited information they have, but at the same time, it is assuring to see that others are still working on combating these prejudices. I feel this way not just about the Asian community, but every other community that has gone through or is going through the same experience.

Entry 4:

Last week I only went to work for three days as we had the rest of the week off for the Independence Day. I received an email midnight on Sunday that I will need to submit, by Wednesday, a draft for a public comment on behalf of a community organization partner of AOU opposing a recent proposed public housing rule by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). My director asked if I was interested in drafting a letter two weeks ago and I said yes, but I did not expect the assignment to come in such short notice, therefore I started working on the assignment right away on Monday. I have never drafted a public comment letter, nor do



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I know much about it. I know it is part of the administrative procedure for the department to hear from the public opinions about the proposed rule and the more voices they hear, potentially the more careful they need to be when finalizing the rule.

Since I was drafting the letter on behalf of a community organization partner of AOU which I did not know much of, I found it a little difficult at first to find the right angle to assert arguments opposing such rule. I wanted to avoid overlaps with AOU's own letter as I learned that the department tend to collapse materials that are the same and it would be a waste of time and energy if I were to simply make similar arguments as the AOU. I started gathering data on the organization and their clients to get a better idea of why they are opposing the rule and why HUD should listen to them. I also looked at different templates by leading organization who are also opposing the proposed rule to understand better the structure and flow of a public comment letter. Eventually, I was able to turn in the assignment on time.

This assignment gave me a taste of what it may be like working in a law firm if I was given an assignment that I did not understand and had to finish under time pressure. It was challenging and slightly frustrating in the beginning as I really had no idea of how to write a letter like this, but I am glad and surprised by how it turned out after just three days.