



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Nicki Montoya

**Law School:** Boston College Law School

**Fellowship:** Human Rights First- Refugee Representation

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### Entry 1: 6/19/2019

A few weeks ago, I began my summer internship working in Los Angeles at Human Rights First in Refugee Representation. I have conducted intakes with potential clients seeking asylum and drafted detailed reports with extensive country conditions documentation and legal analysis. Last week, I interviewed a Venezuelan man who has lived in both Venezuela and Mexico. Unfortunately, he has suffered significant verbal and physical abuse as well as employment discrimination because he is a member of the LGBT community and HIV positive. I worked with my supervising attorney to evaluate any eligibility issues regarding his case, determine what the next steps should be, and how to best help. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help provide quality legal representation to asylum seekers while working with attorneys dedicated to upholding human rights. I am proud to be an Equal Justice America Fellow.

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### Entry 2: 7/09/2019

I can't believe I only have about one month left of my internship with Human Rights First. Right now, I am collaborating with outside experts to provide a written affidavit regarding country conditions in Honduras for an asylum case. I am also preparing the declarations of a man and his family from Honduras who have been threatened and extorted by criminal gang members. Later this week, I will get the opportunity to interview a client and his daughter in Spanish. I am looking forward to further developing my client communication skills. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help provide quality legal representation to asylum seekers while working with attorneys dedicated to upholding human rights.



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**Entry 3: 7/25/2019**

The last couple weeks of my internship with Human Rights First have gone by so quickly. Over the past week, I had an incredible experience interviewing a man from Nigeria and I met his wife and children. I learned about their hardships and journey to the US. I have been writing an intake involving their escape from female genital mutilation and torture. Later this week, I will get the opportunity to meet with a client from Honduras to finalize her application for employment authorization. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help provide quality legal representation to asylum seekers while working with attorneys dedicated to upholding human rights. Thank you for staying tuned and please consider donating to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers, may continue.

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**Entry 4: 8/2/2019**

I can't believe this is my last EJA update. During the last week of my internship, I interviewed a transgender woman from El Salvador. Due to a lack of acceptance from her community and family, she became homeless and was forced into prostitution and drug trafficking. I worked with my supervising attorney to evaluate any asylum eligibility issues regarding her case and conducted some legal analysis on whether her drug trafficking offense constitutes a serious nonpolitical crime. Working with asylum seekers this past summer has been an incredible experience-their unwavering strength and determination to build a better life is inspiring. In addition, the staff at Human Rights First provided a collaborative and supportive environment where I was able to grow and become a better attorney and person. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with attorneys dedicated to upholding human rights.