



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Mireya Colin

Law School: Campbell Law School

Fellowship: Legal Aid-Raleigh, NC: Battered Immigrant Project

Entry 1: June 26, 2019

As many of you already know, this summer I have the honor to not only have been selected as a summer intern for Legal Aid, but also selected as a fellow with Equal Justice America! At Legal Aid I am working specifically with the Battered Immigrant Project (BIP) which is part of the Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative. BIP helps immigrant survivors of violence needing assistance with immigration forms such as U Visas and self-petitions under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). I love the work I am doing and to know that I am making a difference in people's lives, that without non-profits such as Legal Aid, would have no other assistance options.

Today I am completing my second week at my internship and I already know this is going to be a busy but impactful summer. Already, I have been able to organize and request more evidence to send with a client's adjustment application and next week I will be working on a U Visa case. Last Friday, I was able to attend a Wake County SART meeting with the other interns from the office, where we learned gender affirming responses to sexual violence and response to sexual violence within the Military. I am being exposed and educated to many different areas! I look forward to the future case assignments I will be assigned.



Entry 2: July 10, 2019

Coming back from our four-day weekend has been exhausting! Today I am completing my fourth week at Legal Aid of Raleigh, NC working with the Battered Immigrant Project. Today I was able to attend a USCRI networking lunch which will allow me to expand my connections with like-minded individuals.

Last week, I worked on several translations for an affidavit to submit with a U-Visa case. In that affidavit, the client had to recap all the time's she was abused by her husband. As I was translating the piece from Spanish to English, I couldn't help



but put myself in the client's shoes. I felt her pain and hurt. There is a chance that her application will not be approved, and it will most definitely end up on a waitlist since the USCIS has reached their cap limit of 10,000 approvals and are backed up for five years now. After a while, I no longer felt pain for her because this client is so strong. She is retraumatizing herself in order to at least try to obtain a better life for her and her children. All I can do is help in any way that I can. My role here may seem small but makes the world of difference to the clients we help. I have so much respect for non-profits such as Legal Aid who really believe in their mission of ensuring equal access to justice and removing legal barriers to economic opportunity. This mission aligns perfectly with what I hope to accomplish after graduating law school.

Something we have to remember when working with these types of cases is to take care of ourselves. Compassion fatigue is common among professionals who have to everyday read about some of the cases we deal with. When I go home, I do things that are stress relievers. I like to watch comedies and listen to music so that I am not emotionally drained by the type of work I am doing.



Entry 3: July 24, 2019

Yesterday was my 22nd birthday. All I could think of was how blessed I am to be in the positions and opportunities that I am in today. I saw a quote by Malala Yousafzai that read: "I raise up my voice-not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back." The quote brought me back to why I wanted to spend my summer at a non-profit working with immigrants rather than at a big firm or clerking for a judge. I am here for the many victims of domestic violence seeking solace and a path to remain in the United States. I am here for the many who are afraid to use their voices. I am so grateful for Equal Justice America for allowing me to be able to dedicate my summer working with the Battered Immigrant Project of Legal Aid in North Carolina.

Entry 4: August 7, 2019

This is my last fellow update. I will keep it short and sweet :) I can't believe how this summer has flown by! I would first like to thank Equal Justice America for providing me with this amazing opportunity to represent their organization and the amazing work that they help to achieve. Secondly, I want to thank Legal Aid of North Carolina for taking a chance on me and allowing me to be one of their legal interns for the summer. I have learned so much about myself and my future goals.

I grew up in a domestic violence home and I always felt like there was nothing I could do but this summer I figured out that there was. Being able to help mothers, daughters, and families who were victims of domestic violence in their path to residency has been such a beautiful and heartfelt experience for me.