EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA
LEGAL SERVICES FELLOWSHIPS

Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:

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Fellowship: St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance of Catholic Charities

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Entry 1:

Today was the start of my third week at St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Assistance at Catholic Charities. I've been offered incredible opportunities to learn the diverse aspects of immigration law through intensive training, workshops, and shadowing attorney meetings. One of my first assignments consisted of writing an extreme hardship letter to USCIS to keep a married couple together in order to avoid emotional and financial hardship. I've also been tasked in drafting an appellate brief to the Board of Immigration Appeals to explain the reasons why a woman who left El Salvador to escape the domestic abuse of a former partner should be granted asylum under U.S. law. And today, I was assigned a research assignment to see if existing case law can support a late asylum application from a detainee that was held in an immigration facility for eleven months. I'm grateful and excited to be part of an organization that works hard to assist immigrants who cannot otherwise afford legal aid. I am so grateful and proud to be an Equal Justice Fellow!

Entry 2:

I'm about halfway through my internship at the Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance of Catholic Charities. I participated in a citizenship workshop by filling out applications for lawful permanent residents who might otherwise be unable to afford a lawyer for their naturalization process. I also completed several DACA renewal applications for young students and workers who depend on their work authorization cards for their livelihood. And finally, I was able to sit in on two court hearings in immigration court and family court. Attending these hearings in front of a judge felt intimidating to me, but it reminded me that this is the reality that many immigrants are facing when they seek a better life in the United States. If they can do it, I can do it too.

Entry 3:

With only two weeks left for my summer internship at the St. Francis Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance, the stakes feel high as I try my best to wrap up my casework with clients in need of legal assistance. I just completed an I-130 family petition for a U.S citizen father on behalf of his adult daughter from Mexico. It was hard but necessary to explain to the client that although the petition may be approved within a year or less, the wait time for a visa to be available for her category can take at least 20 years. That is 20 years of "waiting in line" without any temporary assistance or deferred action. I am also finishing up my argument to the Board of Immigration Appeals for an asylum applicant, under the supervision of an attorney. It has been difficult to find favorable case law for an immigration topic that is incredibly convoluted and ever-changing. But the appeals process is there for a reason; and I am happy to take part in helping the client in any way I can.

Entry 4:

I am very happy to share how my summer internship at the St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance was for me. These last few weeks flew by as I wrapped up my casework, including petitions, waivers, adjustment of status applications, and DACA renewals. I participated in another naturalization workshop where I continued to learn and better prepare citizenship applications for U.S. residents. I went in having some experience in immigration law, but I left with even more knowledge and confidence under my belt. The best part of this internship was knowing that the tasks I was doing, no matter how big or small, were advancing someone's American dream. The thank you's and expressions of gratitude were a reminder of the importance for me to continue pursuing a legal education. I know this is only the beginning of what can be done for our immigrant community.

I'd also like to share a few certificates I received in appreciation of my time as an intern. I am even more appreciative of all the opportunities I was given!