



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Ludovica “Poppy” Pizzichelli

Law School: Southern Methodist University

Fellowship: Equal Justice Center (Dallas)

Entry 1: 6/10/19

Over the past two weeks I have been settling in to my summer internship with Equal Justice Center’s Dallas office. I have been providing research support to my supervisors who have been working on recovering wages and unpaid overtime for more than a dozen restaurant workers. I have also sat in on a mediation for that same case where we were able to secure a victory for our clients, recovering all of the unpaid wages and overtime their employer wrongly withheld. This past week I attended a three-day orientation and training in the EJC’s main office in Austin. During this training, I learned about representing immigrant workers, the FLSA, the Texas Minimum Wage Act, mechanics’ liens, how to communicate with opposing counsel and opposing parties, and so much more. I know that I will be calling on the information and skills I learned during this training to effectively represent low income workers throughout the summer. I am proud to be an Equal Justice America Fellow, and I will follow up this check-in on 6/24/2019.

Entry 2: 6/24/2019

These past couple of weeks I have been working on putting together a U visa application for one of our clients at Equal Justice Center. Since the organization is primarily a nonprofit labor and employment law firm, many of our immigration clients are also our labor & employment law clients. In our case, our client was a victim of labor trafficking and fraud in foreign labor contracting at the hands of his employer. I worked on putting together all of the immigration forms for our client and his kids, worked on the cover letter and index, and other tasks here and there. The process is long because it requires high attention to detail, and frequently forms have to be updated with newly learned information.

U visas require a Supplement B form, which is the certification from law enforcement that the applicant is, has been, or will be useful to investigation into their attacker. Because this is a case regarding crimes related to and



including trafficking, this case was reported to the Department of Labor. We are waiting on other Supplement B certifications for other clients from the Department of Labor, but the agency has instituted a moratorium on these certifications. <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/human-trafficking-victims-blocked-from-visas-by-trump-wage-boss> This is a major problem for victims of labor-related crimes, who would require Department of Labor Supplement B forms to get their relief. The U visa exists as a way to encourage immigrants to report crimes of which they are a victim, and it is extremely important to protect this process. Because of this change, immigrants will no longer want to or feel comfortable enough to come forward about their victimization, forcing them to suffer through these situations and letting their traffickers walk away free.

Entry 3: 7/8/19

These past couple of weeks I've been working on a variety of litigation-related assignments, including discovery responses, an EEOC charge, and legal research. I also had the great opportunity of assisting the Texas AFL-CIO's Dallas Labor Citizenship Drive on behalf of the Equal Justice Center last weekend. It was incredible to see volunteers from a variety of different unions, organizations, and law firms come together to provide free immigration help to workers. Dozens of workers were assisted in their naturalization applications, which is part of a broader AFL-CIO initiative to get more workers naturalized so they can become voters.

Organizations like the Equal Justice Center are so important because they represent workers that other law firms may not want to or be able to represent.

Entry 4:

This is my last update for the summer. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Equal Justice Center, and even though I still have three weeks left, it doesn't feel like enough time! Over the past two weeks I've been working on a variety of litigation projects including legal research, preparing discovery responses, drafting portions of motions or responses to opposing counsel's motions, and so on. I have also been working on intakes to help determine whether potential clients have cases and whether we can represent them in those actions. Finally, I have been able to sit in on conferences with opposing counsel as well as client calls so I had a chance to learn more about client interaction. Equal Justice Center provides its interns with a variety of assignments that give us the opportunity to make a difference for the organization's clients.