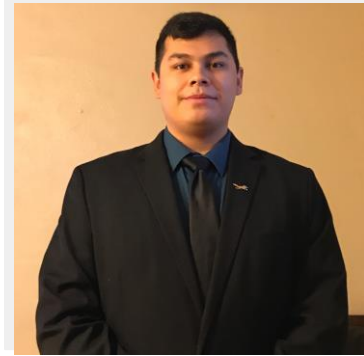




Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Daniel Esquivel

Law School: St. Mary's Law School

Fellowship: Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Del Rio Office)

Entry 1:

These past few weeks I have had the pleasure of working with the staff at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (Del Rio Office). In connection with my summer internship at TRLA, Equal Justice America has awarded me a fellowship to support my internship gain practical legal experience in my hometown. I have already worked on cases helping provide legal services to those who would otherwise not be able to afford them involving divorce, domestic violence, and landlord tenant disputes. Seeing the impact helping our clients access legal help to resolve these significant issues motivates me to continue pursuing my legal career with the ultimate goal of serving others. As part of my fellowship I will continue to update my progress and experiences this summer.

Entry 2:

The past two weeks have come and gone quickly; that said, it is time for my second fellowship update. These two weeks have strengthened my understanding of the positive influence legal aid services have on communities like my own. The number of clients who tell me a family friend, local civic organization, or government agency recommended they seek TRLA for help in their legal issue is demonstrative of the great responsibility legal aid services possess. This continued patronage also demonstrates to me those responsibilities are being met in the lives of those clients. With my family law casework, I can interact with these clients first hand. From drafting protective orders that protect abused spouses to drafting divorce decrees setting the familial relationship guiding the parents and children alike, I have seen the profound impact our civil law system can have on our societal fabric. Knowing the clients I interact with are often going through the most tumultuous episodes of their lives reinforces my desire to work to the best of my ability to serve them.



Entry 3:

This is my third fellowship update sharing the practical legal experience I am gaining the first summer of my law school career. My working interest in family law has continued to grow. The more I draft petitions, orders, and motions, the more I feel I am learning the subtle nuances in this area of law. As such, I am getting better at understanding what information is relevant to the questions I have and how to work cases from scratch. In fact, this past week, one of my supervising attorneys allowed me to fully flesh out a divorce case from start to finish; original petition to final decree and everything in between. While I've still got a lot to learn, I am glad to see my ability to tackle a real legal problem has sharpened to this level during my fellowship.

Additionally, my case work has expanded in the past two weeks to include employment law related to migrant farmworkers. A current major assignment I have involves investigating and compiling information on farmers and ranchers potentially taking advantage of their farmhands in violation of federal law. Knowing who to sue isn't always as clear cut and obvious as it may appear. The investigation process is a significant yet often inconspicuous part of the legal process.

With agriculture being of central importance to my community and our neighbor's, the incidental issues relating to labor and employment legal issues are ever present in local conscious. While conditions have improved since the times my grandfather's family worked as migrant agricultural workers, some people in positions of power still try to take advantage of decent working people. I am blessed to have the opportunity to play even a small part in remedying at least one possible instance of this kind of injustice.

Entry 4:

With the summer of my 1L year coming to an end, it is time for my last Equal Justice America Fellowship update. I am grateful to have been blessed with the opportunity to return to my home community and learn from a group of talented attorneys and support staff. I am proud to call those people my mentors and hope in time to call them my colleagues. This summer truly was like no other as I gained practical legal experience and a real understanding of the tangible effect the law has on people. I will take these experiences forward with me as I start off my 2L this month and into the future. I want to take the opportunity to thank Texas RioGrande Legal Aid and EJA for allowing me to have this formative experience and would like to endorse the work these organizations do in promoting public access to legal services.