



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Laura DiGiulio

**Law School:** Temple University Beasley School of Law

**Fellowship:** HIAS PA- Domestic Violence Initiative

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### Entry 1: June 10, 2019

I just got back from a weekend in Memphis, TN and am ready to start off my third week as a legal intern at HIAS PA and as an Equal Justice America Fellow! I am working on the Domestic Violence Initiative, helping survivors of domestic violence gain security by providing assistance with their immigration cases. In two short weeks, I have learned a lot about the type of visas available to the individuals we serve as well as the unique challenges they must confront. At last week's organization-wide staff meeting, we even had a training about domestic violence, as it is an issue that can become relevant in a variety of immigration settings. This week I am working on intake of new clients for the first time, and also hope to complete another client's DACA renewal!

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### Entry 2: June 26, 2019

Yesterday my fellow interns and I completed our first intake clinic at HIAS PA's main office. Since most of my work on the Domestic Violence team focuses on individuals eligible for U visas or immigration benefits under VAWA, this was a great opportunity to work with clients for whom other types of benefits might be more appropriate. In this case, both of the clients I spoke with have medical conditions that, if returned to their home countries, could threaten their lives. Unfortunately, at this time there do not appear to be many, or any, remedies available to them, and that was difficult. However, hopefully by meeting with them in person to hear their stories and discuss their situation in their own language, providing whatever information or resources we could, we were able to be of some assistance. In the last two weeks, I have also been able to complete U visa and adjustment of status applications for other clients, while conducting telephone intakes and researching questions that arise in our clients' cases.



**Entry 3:** July 8, 2019

Since my last post, I've been working on a response to a request for more evidence in one of our client's cases, which is an important step in many immigration benefit application processes! I've also been calling several clients to remind them what steps they need to take while they await processing of their applications, and letting them know that, unfortunately, processing times for the visa they applied for are now up to four years! Finally, I tagged along to immigration court with one of HIAS PA's Youth Initiative attorneys and saw my first master hearing. Most individuals did not have formal legal representation, but the judge suggested they obtain representation from organizations like HIAS or, if they had the resources, private immigration attorneys. I am learning more each week and cannot believe how fast the summer is flying!

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**Entry 4:** August 1, 2019

**Sentence 1:** This summer has truly flown and tomorrow marks my last day as a Legal Intern at HIAS PA! Over the last few weeks, my work has ranged from contacting immigrant victims of very recent and/or current domestic violence to assess how we can help them to connecting clients with housing resources to putting together the naturalization application for an 18 year old son of one of our clients who just completed high school, and having held a green card for 5 years, is eligible to become a citizen! While the practice of immigration law is far from boring, I have read that some worry it might be tedious to fill out the same forms repeatedly. My response to that concern, after this summer, is that even if that were true, each client at HIAS PA has a unique story, unique gifts, and represents a unique opportunity to "welcome the stranger."