



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



Name: Ellen Goff

Law School: The University of Chicago

Fellowship: Legal Aid Chicago, Immigrants and Workers' Rights Practice Group

Entry 1:

This summer I'm interning at Legal Aid Chicago in their Immigrants and Workers Rights practice group (IWR). The organization is the largest provider of free civil legal services in Cook County, IL. Groups like this are why I wanted to come to law school in the first place, and I am so excited to be part of the organization this summer! Specifically, I am working in the Immigrants and Workers' Rights practice group. It has four teams within the groups: immigration, migrant workers, employment, and human trafficking. I am mostly working with employment, but I have also worked on a few projects for immigration. During my first two weeks, I have jumped into my work. On my second day, I helped draft a U visa, which provided a path to citizenship for a survivor of sexual assault who cooperated with the police in reporting the incident. In employment, I have already conducted a few client interviews with people who are appealing the denial of unemployment benefits. I am so excited to keep learning from the brilliant and dedicated attorneys in my group. Thank you to EJA for making it possible for me and other public-interest focused law students to participate in such meaningful unpaid internships!

Entry 2:

My work at Legal Aid Chicago is still going really well! I have had a lot of client interaction, which is good because direct services energizes me. Appealing denials of unemployment benefits moves pretty quickly, so I have already been able to work on a whole case and be part of its hearing before an administrative judge. With the help of my research, we found some good precedents to show that the client should receive benefits even though they had quit their job. We are still waiting to hear the results, but the judge seemed to view the client's testimony favorably. There have been some challenging client interactions as well. It's never easy to tell someone that they do not qualify for our services. However, the attorneys at Legal Aid Chicago have a good network within the city and work hard to make sure there is some other place we can try referring the clients we can't serve. I am fortunate to work at an organization with attorneys that are so dedicated to teaching me and to serving our clients.

**Entry 3:**

One of the great parts of my practice group within Legal Aid Chicago is that we do so many different things. As someone still figuring out what I want to do within public interest law, I have especially benefited from the exposure. I have gotten to do more immigration work in the past couple of weeks. I took over a case after a supervising attorney left, and this has been a challenging but rewarding learning experience! I have gotten practice speaking to clients about emotionally traumatic experiences in order to turn their testimony into a compelling story for USCIS. Since the original attorney on the case has left, I have gotten to know other individuals on my group better. Legal Aid Chicago is a very collaborative place where people go out of their way to teach interns and provide any resources we may need. My employment cases are also still going well. I have been preparing some more clients for hearings as well as doing ongoing research projects. These projects have been interesting for me to dive deeper into a specific legal issue, such as how settlements affect Medicare beneficiaries. I feel good that I am able to leave resources that will help the organization even after my internship is over. I am happy to be at the time in my internship where I have learned enough to be able to contribute more to my team!

Entry 4:

I'm sad to be leaving Legal Aid Chicago! After 1L, it has been great to be doing the kind of work that is the reason I came to law school. It has been an ideal combination of this client-facing work that energizes me and building substantive legal research and writing skills. I enjoy legal research more when I can connect it to a particular client or mission. I have gotten to do in-depth research preparing for a larger employment discrimination case. I also was able to write a memo passing on some organizational knowledge my team gained while negotiating a settlement. Wrapping up has been busy, but I feel like my research has contributed to meaningful cases and it will have a lasting impact on the organization's future best practices. I am sad that I won't get to see many of the cases I have been working on through until the end, but I feel fortunate to have gotten to work with so many clients. I plan to volunteer at one of Legal Aid Chicago's monthly clinics to continue practicing my client interaction skills.