



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Nicholas Chan

**Law School:** University of Pittsburgh School of Law

**Fellowship:** Justice at Work

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### Entry 1:



I am just starting my 3rd week at Justice at Work-Pittsburgh, a legal aid organization that provides pro bono representation for immigrant workers with labor rights related claims, and am loving every moment of it!

I've learned a lot more about trafficking visas, U-visas, seasonal H-2A and H-2B worker visas, and protections under the Violence Against Women Act. It's really incredible reading the case notes for the beginning to end process of client intake to sometimes them being granted a visa to remain in the country! It's always so nerve wracking when we receive mail at our office.

After working on an intake project with all of the staff of the organization, one of the staff attorneys echoed what we were all thinking after an exhausting two days working with 10 different clients. This work shows us some of the worst sides of humanity, but also shows you the resilience of survivors and how there are so many advocates on the frontlines willing to help others.

Without support from organizations like EJA, I would not be able to support myself as a law student while also dedicated to work in public interest law.



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## Entry 2:



I am finishing up my 5th week at Justice at Work. I'm about halfway through my summer internship and got to participate in an outreach event this week.

A lot of our clients are located out in rural parts of Pennsylvania who work on farms, in restaurants, and various other small businesses with seasonal workers. Our office split up into two teams to cover certain small towns in western Pennsylvania. We usually conduct outreach at night when workers are off work and have a chance to talk with us.

It was really great experience to actually go out to work sites to see how the workers live. It was important to share know your rights resources with the seasonal workers. We encourage the workers to keep track of their hours and to keep contact information of local organizations and the consulate, so that they can guarantee worker protections and rights.

After driving through a rainstorm, we were hesitant we were going to be able to talk to any workers. However, we found some worker housing and we were invited in to chat for a little bit. It was great to hear that the workers are happy and satisfied with their employment. After we left the worker's housing, the rain had stopped and there was a huge rainbow in the background. Even the workers came out of their house to take pictures.

It was a really positive end to a long and tiring day of much needed outreach. It's great to see that local legal aid organizations are willing to put in the time to make sure workers in even rural parts of Pennsylvania are served and protected.

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## Entry 3:



I am close to finishing week 8 of my internship at Justice at Work and have bittersweet feelings about it. I've loved my time with this organization and am very thankful for everything I've learned so far, but am also looking forward to enjoying a few weeks of my summer without work or school obligations. This work has been extremely rewarding, but can also lead to burnout really fast. I've learned a lot about practicing self-care in this field of legal work and not taking any frustrations personally.



Between the legal research and writing assignments, I've made time to take mental breaks by helping out with other important administrative work around the office. One part of our office that I really appreciate is our wall of resources. We have handouts, flyers, and fact sheets on a variety of topics including healthcare, housing, general know your rights information, and labor rights. Whenever community members stop by our office, they frequently look through our resource library. One thing I've noticed is the need for these handouts to be in multiple languages since we work with predominantly immigrant populations. It's a great first step to have these handouts, but as those in the legal community, we must think intersectionally about the needs of our clients.

It was really eye-opening to see the need and demand for these resources in multiple languages. During outreach trips, we often pull from these resources to handout to farmworkers. They are often grateful for these legal materials written and explained in their native language. The language barriers are sometimes the very reason workers get exploited by employers because they assume, they are unaware of their legal rights.

Growing up in a household with non-English speaking immigrant parents, I've experienced the first-hand frustration of living in a country that does not cater to your specific needs. I hope to take my personal experiences and draw from them as a future legal advocate. I can see the light at the end of the internship, but will definitely miss walking by the resource library every morning.

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#### Entry 4:



I just finished up my last staff meeting at Justice at Work. I can't believe how fast 10-weeks flies by. I've had an incredible experience this summer as a Justice at Work intern. I was able to accomplish all of goals I set out for myself this summer including having a strong writing sample, more interaction with clients, and more exposure to the employment/labor side of the organization's mission.

I have had the opportunity to work with many amazing immigration attorneys and greatly expanded my scope of knowledge in immigration law. From the outreach trips in rural Pennsylvania to the staff-wide emergency meeting to accommodate our 10 trafficking clients, it has been an unforgettable experience seeing the day-to-day lives of

immigration attorneys. I am much more familiar with trafficking cases than before and hope to continue down this path towards asylum advocacy. I hope to use these great lessons and experiences from this summer to shape the trajectory of my legal career dedicated to serving underrepresented and vulnerable populations.