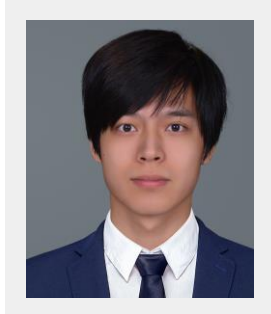# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA
LEGAL SERVICES FELLOWSHIPS

Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:

Name: Xinmin Ma
Law School: Georgetown University Law Center
Organization: Greater Boston Legal Services

Week of June 15th

I have been working at the Greater Boston Legal Services for several weeks in the Welfare Law Unit. During this difficult time, many people especially those unemployed need legal help to make sure they receive the stimulus payments and other social benefits. Through training, researching, and advocacy events, I am working hard to help them.

Week of July 6th

Another week into the internship at Greater Boston Legal Services. Very busy this week! As the states are opening up, more people contact GBLS for help. Public benefits related to COVID-19 will end in two weeks. Many people are facing financial hardships without government help. Our job is to protect their legitimate interests in obtaining social benefits.

Week of July 27th

This is the last week working at Greater Boston Legal Services. Still busy! I have helped my clients get their legitimate SNAP and PEBT benefits. More often than not, clients are denied social benefits not because they are not eligible but because they misunderstand the policies or submitted their application wrongfully. Attorneys play an important role to help clients obtain those benefits. This also reflects a problem inherent in American welfare system. Complicated regulations and policies make it extremely difficult for lay people to understand. Some changes needed.

Week of August 10th

I have finished the 10-week internship working with the Greater Boston Legal Services, Welfare Law Unit. During this internship, I have conducted a lot of legal research, made proactive phone calls to GBLS's former clients, and helped several clients resolve legal issues related to their welfare benefits applications. According to my experience, government agencies generally work hard to quickly process applications and provide financial help as soon as possible. However, sometimes things do go wrong. Applicants usually cannot resolve those problems by themselves due to language obstacle or lack of knowledge on governing regulations or policies. Our lawyers' job mostly is to connect clients with government agencies to solve the misinformation problem. This reflects critical problems inherent in the welfare system, including the lack of interpreters and the over-complexity of regulations and policies.