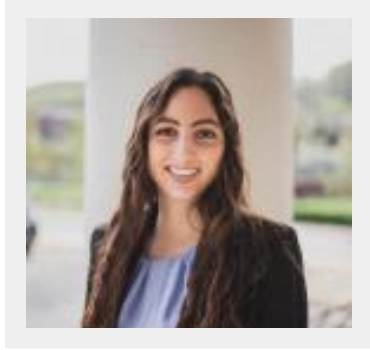




Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Elizabeth Tonkin

Law School: GW Law

Organization: Catholic Charities

Week of June 15th

Today marks day 15 for me at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston with the St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance. This summer I am interning with the General Immigration Office and will primarily be assisting on Naturalization Cases. I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to serve so many deserving people.

This is my first time working in the immigration field and having just completed my 1L year at GW Law I have not taken immigration law, so I have been grateful for the extensive training I have received. I have already learned so much and look forward to spending the next 7 weeks of my summer continuing to learn and grow professionally and personally.

Working remotely has posed its challenges, but I am grateful for the the kindness of the staff I have worked alongside so far and the ability to do this work from thousands of miles away.

Please consider supporting Equal Justice America and the work they do to support greater access to legal aid across America.

Week of July 6th

Today marks the end of week six of my summer internship program with the St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Services. I have been surprised at how quickly this summer is flying by despite being in quarantine.

The past few weeks I have been primarily working on assisting clients apply for naturalization. I have enjoyed getting to know them and hear pieces of their stories -- I am humbled by the obstacles they have overcome and the continued hope they have for the future.

Since the #SCOTUS #DACA decision was passed on June 18th, we have also been busy preparing to again



offer services to Dreamer applicants.

I am grateful for the support and work of Equal Justice America as they seek to provide equal access to legal representation to the more than 80% of those living in poverty who require civil legal services but do not have access to it.

Week of July 27th

The fact that August 1st is tomorrow is hard to wrap my mind around. This summer has been different, unpredictable, and even a little stressful. So much of life is up in the air for me, for everyone, and the reality of this state of limbo is not lost on me – especially when I am on the phone with clients who were elated following the #SCOTUS DACA decision, only to find out this week that it may mean nothing for their situation. This summer my eyes have been more widely opened to many injustices in this world, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside and under some very passionate individuals at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston who wake up every day to help those in hard places. Equal Justice America is committed to providing greater access to justice for the 80% of the population that does not have access to civil legal needs. If you are interested in supporting the work they do, especially in such an unpredictable time, you can do so below.

Week of August 10th

Over the course of my internship, my class of interns read through the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey with our supervising attorneys. We set aside an hour each week to evaluate and discuss the habits we live by because those decisions matter. I appreciated that my program carved out time to both read and discuss a book on lifestyle effectiveness; it became clear that the importance of the skills and experience we were gaining was equaled by the character it was producing within us.

I believe this is how Equal Justice America sees the world too – that wholistic justice, the kind that can radically permeate and shake communities, begin in and through the seemingly insignificant decisions we make in our individual lives. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of a program that encourages and intentionally supports rising attorneys as they discover how to use their new and growing skill set to positively impact their community and world. And if that's the goal, then every single step counts.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to spend my summer working for the St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Services. I can confidently say that I walked away with a greater understanding of the challenges and joys of the immigration field of law as well as was challenged to continue dedicating myself to growing in my ability, knowledge, and character. And I am thankful to have had the opportunity to do so under the leadership of so many passionate people.