



Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



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Law School: RUTGERS LAW SCHOOL

Organization: CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NEWARK-
IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Week of June 15th

In my first couple weeks interning @Catholic Charities Newark Immigration Assistance Program, I have learned the basics of immigration law and worked on various brief assignments. Working remotely has taught me to adapt and be flexible. In weekly meetings with staff attorneys, I am introduced to new aspects of the practice such as removal proceedings defense and how to approach asylum applications. I have enjoyed my assignments to date, which allow me to study and apply salient case law and research country conditions for clients seeking asylum. Assisting clients in need of legal representation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, is critical on New Jersey. I am grateful for the support I have received from Rutgers and EJA to pursue public interest work this summer. To support students pursuing public interest internships, please consider donating to EJA.

Week of July 6th

I am learning and applying key areas of immigration law at Catholic Charities Immigration Assistance Program. The staff attorneys and DOJ accredited representatives go above and beyond training me in naturalization, special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS), VAWA, U, and T visas, and other key areas of the law. Lately, I have been handling the cases of several SIJS applicants. Thus, I am writing briefs and compiling all relevant paperwork for unaccompanied minors escaping abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect by their parents in their home countries. A minor's custodian in the US must petition for custody of him or her from a family court judge. With a grant of custody and order of special findings for SIJS, the minor may apply for status from USCIS. If granted, the removal proceedings in Immigration Court may be terminated, and the minor has a path towards obtaining his or her green card. Getting to know our clients via Zoom and listening to their stories is highly impactful. Some stories are tough to listen to, as many minors were forced to work or solicited by gangs in their home countries. As such, I often research country conditions revealing that the minor would be in danger if removed to his or her home nation. In the US, though, many applicants can go to school, have a guardian to care for them, and be safe from



harm. Being able to work in the field and gain practical knowledge and skills is invaluable. Without the support of EJA and Rutgers Law School, this would not be possible.

Week of July 27th

The past few weeks at Catholic Charities Immigration Assistance Program have been filled with training seminars from staff attorneys, custody brief drafting, client interviews, and client consultations. I'm helping staff attorneys move several special immigrant juvenile cases along. This includes drafting briefs, preparing court documents, and collecting necessary paperwork on behalf of clients. Being able to interview clients has been a rewarding and positive experience. Some recent trainings include 'practical issues in non-profit work' and 'family-based immigration.' It's been nice getting to know everyone on staff, too. There have been opportunities to interact with my colleagues even though my internship is taking place remotely. I am grateful that the staff has worked so hard to make this an enriching summer for me. I look forward to finishing these final two weeks on a high note.

Week of August 10th

My final few weeks at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark have mainly involved more custody filings for minors hoping to apply for special immigrant juvenile status. I also had my final training with staff attorneys and fellow interns. We discussed ethical concerns in immigration law, including the importance of conflict checks and upholding the pillars of professional responsibility. It has been a pleasure helping a handful of SIJS cases move forward and become one step closer to filing. There are several forms and exhibits that must be reviewed before a petitioner can have a hearing at family court. Overall, I learned a lot during my 11 weeks of interning. I am grateful to have had such an enriching, full-time internship during these uncertain times. The attorneys at Catholic Charities went above and beyond to help me develop my legal skills. They provided invaluable advice for handling cases and clients that will help me in my future. Now it's time to get back to class at Rutgers Law School!