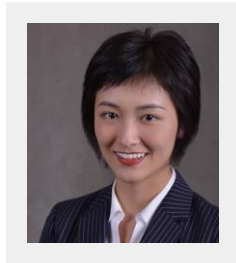




## Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Queenie J. Chen

**Law School:** Washington University School of Law

**Organization:** Greater Boston Legal Services

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### Week of June 15th

As some of you know, I am a rising second-year law student at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law. This summer I have the privilege of interning at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) in the Asian Outreach Unit as an Equal Justice America (EJA) Fellow. As a part of my fellowship, I will be posting updates about my experience.

I began volunteering with GBLS in March, helping primarily marginalized immigrant communities with filing unemployment insurance claims. Many of these immigrants have had their lives turned upside down by the COVID-19 pandemic. When I speak to them in their mother tongue, they open up as if they have found someone they can trust and empathize with in their struggles during these distressing times. Through these interactions, I learned about the multi-faceted and untold hardships that immigrants suffer, only exacerbated by this pandemic. So far, I have conducted bilingual client interviews and contributed to research on domestic and international refugee law and policy.

EJA helps many public interest students like me pursue this critical work. As I continue my work in the weeks to come, please consider donating to the non-profit organization.

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### Week of July 6th

As I enter the sixth week of my summer internship with Greater Boston Legal Services as an Equal Justice America (EJA) Fellow, I am excited to share my second EJA Fellow Update. As the Asian Outreach Unit is committed to providing access to legal services during this uncertain time, in April, we replaced our Chinese- and Vietnamese-language clinics at various community sites with telephone clinics. During these past few weeks, I have had the chance to assist with telephone clinics, draft problem statements summarizing legal issues, and participate in case discussion meetings. These have been extremely valuable experiences for me—particularly as a first-year law student who is unsure of which area of law I want to practice in the future—as I was able to explore several areas of law, including employment, housing, and immigration. Furthermore, I have had the chance to do case law research on immigrant post-conviction relief and observe a language-access campaign strategy meeting with community partners.

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## **Week of July 27<sup>th</sup>**

Time for another EJA Fellow Update! I am grateful for my experience with Greater Boston Legal Services this summer, which has been made possible through a fellowship grant from Equal Justice America (EJA). In the past weeks, I have had the chance to conduct immigration screenings and draft affidavits and research memoranda for immigration law cases. The most fulfilling part of my internship during this period has been interviewing a client's family in order to draft support letters that attest to the client's good character for a motion to reopen a deportation case. Through this experience, I sharpened my empathetic skills, practiced active listening, and learned to modulate my language to suit my audience. After the interviews, I weaved the family's stories into succinct and effective support letters by leveraging the persuasive writing skills I gained from the 1L Legal Writing course in order to advocate for my client so that he could stay in the US with his family.

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## **Week of August 10<sup>th</sup>**

AOU provided a top-notch internship program. It gave me the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, through which I was able to observe numerous aspects of community lawyering. In just ten short weeks, I had the chance to conduct dozens of client intakes, engage in several research projects, and assist with full-rep cases. I even drafted a few declarations for an immigration case. These have been extremely valuable experiences for me—especially as a first-year law student who is still unsure of which area of law I want to pursue in the future—as it allowed me to explore several fields of law, including employment, housing, and immigration.

Through joining a series of guest speaker events, I was likewise exposed to various types of lawyering and organizing models and social justice missions around the country. While these talks delicately imparted the conviction of social justice, it was also through these that I learned that humility is a critical aspect of pursuing the advocacy of social justice. I recognized the need to build trust within the community and collaborate with others. I now understand that lawyering is just one of the many tools to effectively bring an advocacy to life and create lasting social change.

This was a special summer to be an intern with AOU. Several immigrants I worked with have had their lives upended by the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, I learned about the multifaceted and untold hardships the immigrant community systemically experiences and how this pandemic has exacerbated them. On the other hand, hearing about their backgrounds, experiences, and traumas induced a visceral appreciation of their intense individual struggles. These interactions galvanized my commitment to close the access to justice gap and advocate for the importance of legal services in my career after law school.

I am blessed to have worked with a brilliant and caring group of people. They did much more than teach me how to be an effective lawyer; they showed me what kind of lawyer I aspire to be: radical, optimistic, and generous in spirit. No matter where my professional path leads, I hope to always carry these values with me. Thank you again for this incredible internship experience.