



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: African Services Committee

Update 1: I fell in love with immigration law last semester in an immigration clinic. This summer, I get to do this work full-time and work on a variety of cases. On one hand, I love being immersed in this field and learning a lot about more types of immigration cases, and this internship is a perfect fit for me. On the other hand, reading case after case about why these clients are seeking refuge in the US is heartbreaking, and knowing the immigration system is stacked against our clients is depressing. I have to continually remind myself to take things one day at a time and to keep pushing for positive change.

Update 2: These past few weeks have flown by. I love feeling like I am making a real difference in my client's lives. I am in awe of my clients' strength and their ability to overcome unbelievable persecution.

Normally, I am working remotely on my own, meeting with others as needed. Last week, we had an urgent crisis that we all came together to resolve. This collaborative effort reminded me how this internship is such a nice break from the competition of law school. At ASC, my fellow interns, my supervisors, and I are all working as a team. This environment is so refreshing and reminds me why I came to law school in the first place.

Update 3: I have always been too good at empathizing with others. This internship is no different. I feel so deeply for my clients and am emotionally invested in their wellbeing. I could cry anytime just thinking about the terrible things people have done to them. Empathy will be my downfall unless I prioritize self-care and learn how to emotionally separate this work from my own life.

While speaking with a client about an emotionally-taxing issue yesterday, instead of feeling empathy and pity as usual, I felt honored to be able to be the one providing her with information about how to get out of a bad situation. Instead of focusing on how awful the world can be, I need to focus more on the difference I can make. While I know this will not always be easy, it is something I will continue working on.



Entry 4: I cannot believe that I am almost at the end of my internship with African Services Committee. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity to dive into legal immigration cases and learn a lot about the U.S. immigration system. I anticipate becoming an immigration lawyer and advocate after graduation, specializing in asylum cases for women and girls who have faced gender-based violence.

As much as I love working on immigration cases, my long-term career goals are policy oriented. In my short time working on immigration cases, I have already begun to see many disheartening flaws in the U.S. immigration system. After several years of direct representation after graduation, I want to transition into advocating for more humane and efficient immigration policies. I want to help fix the system, rather than continuing to watch people linger in the faults. I want to work in direct client representation first, though, so that I can better understand the current policies and systemic flaws and what changes would be effective solutions.