



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Ayuda, VA Office

Update 1:

Hi friends! This summer I'm (remotely!) interning with Ayuda in Fairfax, Virginia as an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow—which means I'll be sharing some updates this summer about my work.

My first few weeks have been filled with client interaction, adapting to new legal standards, and preparing to take on more responsibility as a rising 3L. So far, my work involves clients seeking asylum from violent domestic situations, clients who have been trafficked in some way, and minor clients pursuing SIJS. I've already learned so much and I'm thrilled to be spending my summer learning even more about the challenges—and the rewards—of this field.

This work, and the work of other EJA Fellows and public interest lawyers, is vital in advocating for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Please consider supporting Equal Justice America which provides fellowships to law students so that they can intern with public interest organizations across the country!

Update 2:

It's hard to believe it's already July, but the past few weeks have absolutely flown by at Ayuda. I've been working with clients from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Many of my clients belong to a family unit that have experienced trauma, but I'm also working with children under the age of 10 who are in the United States without access to anyone they know.

In doing research on the intersection of family law and immigration law regarding minors, it is more evident than ever that the bureaucratic nature of our legal system often delays the support these children are entitled to under the law. The recent vacating of Matter of A-B- and Matter of L-E-A has offered some hope for several of my clients who are fleeing gender and family-based persecution, but there is still plenty of work to be done!



Update 3:

My internship with Ayuda's Virginia office is over half way done, and I'm still so excited about the work I'm doing. I've been able to investigate how prosecutorial discretion works in an immigration context, and I've been helping victims of trafficking adjust their status to become permanent residents of the United States.

As the weeks go by, it is exceedingly clear that those doing this work with me in the "office" are some of the most passionate, determined, creative, and talented in the legal field.

Entry 4:

Today marks my last day with Ayuda, and I could not be more grateful for the opportunity to work with such a powerful organization. This summer helped me gain invaluable insight about how to protect and promote the rights of migrants at every turn. My skills as an advocate have grown considerably, and I feel much more confident—and excited!—about my commitment to public interest work throughout the future of my legal career.

I wouldn't have been able to pursue my passion for this work without the support of Equal Justice America. The funding I was provided as a fellow was crucial to my ability to work within the public interest world, where I have grown so much on a legal level and on a personal level. If you are able, please consider supporting them!