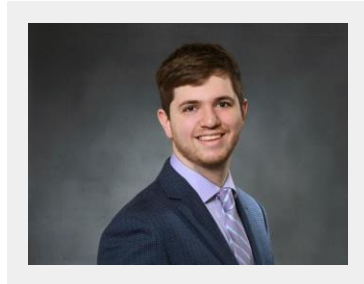




Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: Andrew Bernstein

Law School: University of Pennsylvania

Organization: HIAS Pennsylvania

Update 1:

My first few weeks working in immigration law for HIAS PA have been a whirlwind. I already have 3 clients who are all in the midst of the U Visa process. For those who are unaware, a U Visa provides a path to a green card among other benefits for noncitizen victims of crimes who assist law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of those crimes.

It has been challenging to hear about all that my clients have faced up to this point, and it has been frustrating to see how the backlog of U Visa applications has had an impact on their lives. However, in spite of all they have faced, my clients are incredibly gracious people who make the communities they live in a better place. I am honored to be working on their behalf.

Fortunately, the Biden administration is attempting to rectify the backlog that keeps people like my clients from living their lives fully. I hope the attempt succeeds, not only because it will help keep our communities safer by encouraging noncitizens to work with the police when they have been victimized, but also because I believe that basic human dignity requires that we accept those who enter our country in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

Update 2:

These past two weeks at HIAS Pennsylvania have been busy and exciting. My U Visa cases are beginning to wind down as the last few odds and ends get finished. I am excited and hopeful that each of my clients will eventually receive green cards, and maybe, someday, citizenship.



As July 4th approaches, I find myself thinking about what freedom means. My newest client is seeking asylum here which is, in my opinion, the most basic freedom: Freedom from fear. I hope that this client is able to have that freedom; I simply cannot imagine having to live with such constant, overbearing fear.

While I am thankful that our national cap on refugees was recently raised, I hope that it can be raised even higher. So many look to America as a safe harbor, a place to be free. For those with no where else to turn, we have a duty to lend a hand. And when we do lend that hand, that is something to celebrate and be patriotic about.

Update 3:

It does not seem real to me that I am already about halfway done with my summer internship at HIAS Pennsylvania. I have learned so much, and I have been able to meet some truly great people.

I have been able to take on some new cases recently dealing with DACA and cancellation of removal. It is very exciting to learn about these forms of immigration relief and to be able to help people who need our services.

While my workload is greater than I have had at any point this summer, I remain energized and passionate about what I am doing!

Entry 4:

What a great summer it has been at HIAS Pennsylvania. I am proud to say that I have served numerous clients, prepared various training materials, and helped the organization with their intake process. I learned so much about immigration law, direct client service, and public interest work. The experiences I had and the people I met will have a profound impact on my career. I will be sad when I leave later this week, but I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve!

A big thank you to Equal Justice America for their financial support of my public interest work this summer!

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