



## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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**Law School:** University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School

**Organization:** HIAS Pennsylvania

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### Update 1:

I started my summer internship at HIAS Pennsylvania a few weeks ago, and since then, I've been able to dive headfirst into a variety of projects to support low-income immigrants in the Philadelphia area.

One of my most interesting projects has been researching the potential consequences of the recent *Niz-Chavez v. Garland* Supreme Court decision concerning what must be included in Notices to Appear that initiate deportation proceedings.

I've also been helping staff attorneys prepare application materials for clients, and I recently completed a U-Visa certification form. (U-Visas allow immigrants who have cooperated with law enforcement a path to a green card and other benefits, and the certification is the piece of the application that law enforcement officials sign to verify the immigrant's cooperation.)

I feel lucky to be able to spend part of my time at HIAS PA engaging with clients. I've been taking shifts doing new client intake, and it's been humbling and challenging to hear potential clients' stories, both in intake and sitting in on attorney-client meetings.

I'm grateful to University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School and Equal Justice America for funding my summer work.

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### Update 2:

It's hard to believe it's been a full month since I started at HIAS Pennsylvania!

Most of my time over the past two weeks has gone in one of two very different directions: intake and research.

I had my hardest intake day yet last week. I spent my morning on two very difficult calls (in Spanish, too, adding a layer of challenge) and planned to work on some lower key projects for the remainder of the day. As I was getting started, a potential client I had tried to reach the day before called me back, and I spent another hour hearing her very difficult story of abuse. I ended the day feeling totally emotionally drained. It was certainly



rewarding to know that I had been there for these people to confide in and that our organization could potentially help them or connect them to someone who could help. Still, I had just learned these individuals' difficult stories and didn't know what lay ahead for them or whether they could be helped, and that feeling was and will continue to be tough to handle as I continue doing intakes this summer.

On the research side of things, I'm still working on my motion based on the Niz-Chavez Supreme Court decision. Because the decision was announced so recently, there are new developments each day--so each time I work on a new draft, I'm implementing new information and precedent. It's been really exciting, and I'm hopeful that I can draft something that will be successful in these first few months after the decision.

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### **Update 3:**

I have only a few weeks left at HIAS Pennsylvania, and my work has stayed interesting and kept me busy! I'm motivated each day by the possibility that my work could support immigration relief for folks in my community.

This week, my work centered largely on preparing a cover letter for a client's U-Visa application. Some documents came in at the last minute, so I helped my team tell the client's story in the letter in hopes that their application will be successful. It was interesting to learn from my supervising staff about what kinds of evidence should be included to demonstrate different components of the application, and working through revisions of the letter helped me understand what kinds of details are most important to paint a compelling picture of the client's life and circumstances.

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### **Entry 4:**

It's hard to believe that this is my final EJA Update as I wrap up my time with HIAS Pennsylvania.

Reflecting upon my experience, I feel so grateful for the team I've gotten to work with during my first legal internship. My supervisors have been incredibly attentive to my professional development and my wellbeing and have provided me with a diverse range of assignments and learning experiences. The HIAS staff as a whole have been a delight - I got to have my first in-person experience with the staff at an outdoor picnic a few weeks ago, and beginning to get to know them just before my departure was bittersweet. I've also been lucky to have great co-interns to share wins and losses with throughout the summer.

Though I did not get the chance to meet with any clients in person, I feel lucky to have been able to serve clients over the phone and via video chat throughout the summer. I am grateful that potential clients put their trust in me and in HIAS during intake so that the legal team could evaluate their eligibility for relief. I'm also grateful for the trust and patience of my supervisors' clients, with whom I worked on various applications during the summer. I learned so much about what it means to be an effective legal advocate--that is, to be empathetic, kind, honest, and discerning--by working with these clients and by following the lead of my supervisors.

All in all, I'm fortunate to have had this experience thanks to funding from Equal Justice America and University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School. Please consider donating to EJA.



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