



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Public Counsel

Update 1:

Hello friends! I am so happy to announce that I just finished my first full week of my summer internship at Public Counsel. After a year of learning in law school, I was ready to put my newfound research and writing skills to use. One project I worked on this week involved researching cases from the Board of Veterans Appeals where veterans had been discharged less than honorably but were still eligible for healthcare benefits at the VA. My research will be able to help our attorneys easily find cases with similar facts to our clients' stories so we can make the best legal arguments possible. It was so rewarding to be able to contribute to the team in a meaningful way. I am excited to see how my work makes a real difference for veterans in the future!

Update 2:

Hi friends! It's been a busy week at Public Counsel. Today I was able to give a presentation to my team, summarizing my research on the past two years of character of discharge determination cases at the VA. When a veteran is discharged from the military, they receive a discharge status (honorable, general, dishonorable, etc). Depending on how and why they were discharged, they may be eligible for VA benefits. Many veterans are automatically eligible but there are more tricky cases like when a veteran has an "other than honorable" discharge. I was happy to answer questions from my team about specific cases and circumstances that have allowed veterans with discharges like these to still access benefits. Hopefully we can use this information to help more veterans get access to the benefits they deserve.

Update 3:

Hello friends! It's been another exciting week at Public Counsel. One of my highlights was when I had a client with a disability call and request assistance on having the VA pay off some of his medical bills. My team and I knew this would be a challenge. When we talked with him more, we figured out the real issue was not the medical bills themselves but that they prevented him from accessing housing. We wrote a reasonable accommodations letter to his landlord requesting that they overlook his credit history. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to assist with giving people hope and equal access to basic needs like housing.



Entry 4:

Hello friends! I cannot believe it is already my last week at Public Counsel. I have learned so much and am so grateful for all of the wonderful attorneys, clerks, and clients I have gotten to know during my time here. My highlight this week was submitting a VA claim for a client who had previously been denied benefits. I was able to complete detailed research on the medical literature surrounding his disability as well as previous VA decisions to write a compelling brief about why he was entitled to care. I am so grateful I got to be a part of this veteran's journey and hope I could make a difference in his life.