

*Reflections by Erica Rosenbaum, New York Women's Bar Association Fellow at Her Justice*

The primary project I worked on during my fall fellowship at Her Justice was a Battered Spouse Waiver for a client seeking to remove the conditions on her green card in order to stay in the United States after leaving her abusive husband. The project was extremely fulfilling because I was able to facilitate the case from the beginning to the end.

I first met with our client on my own and gathered details about her experience in order to begin drafting an affidavit to support her petition. That first meeting was challenging due to language-related issues. I greatly appreciated the trust Her Justice placed in me by affording me the opportunity to meet with the client without any supervision early on in my fellowship and we quickly overcame any obstacles.

My next meeting with the client was a couple weeks later with my wonderful supervisor, Margie, to facilitate translation and make sure we got as many details as possible so that I could draft the affidavit. After the meetings were concluded and the details of our client's story were in order, I compiled all the materials that would be sent to USCIS for our client's petition – the relevant immigration forms, the affidavit I drafted, and the supporting exhibits. My fellowship ended before we got the results of our client's case, but I am hopeful and optimistic that the petition will be approved. As for my experience, it was rewarding to be able to help this client in such a tangible way, and I really appreciated her willingness to open up to me, despite the fact that I am not yet a practicing attorney.

In addition to the Battered Spouse Waiver described above, I completed many smaller projects which allowed me to hone my legal research and writing skills. I drafted a memorandum for another supervisor, Tim, regarding the types of evidence that are admissible in immigration proceedings, including challenges to USCIS requests for arrest records. I also researched and drafted a memo about USCIS' determination regarding "good moral character" and grounds of inadmissibility, specifically as related to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitions. These research/writing assignments were particularly valuable to me because unlike legal writing in law school, it was solely my responsibility to determine what legal sources to consult.

In addition, I researched the requirements to prove presence in the United States as a result of human trafficking, the procedure related to immigration petitions for widows of U.S. citizens, and searched for information in Mexican news sources about a specific trafficker. I also had the opportunity to meet with Tim and two of his clients on other matters.

My fellowship at Her Justice was an extraordinary learning experience. I greatly expanded my knowledge of immigration law, and in particular, how the law (or at least the application of it) has changed under the current administration. Furthermore, my fellowship gave me significant client contact experience, and it afforded me the opportunity to use my Spanish language skills and learn more about how to interview clients who have been traumatized.

I admire Her Justice's model as an organization (one that primarily works with pro-bono attorneys at for-profit law firms). I plan to return to Minneapolis after graduating from law

school, and I hope start an organization there that operates under a similar model as Her Justice. The semester that I spent at Her Justice reaffirmed for me the reason why I wanted to go to law school in the first place.

I would like to thank the New York Women's Bar Association Foundation for this invaluable opportunity.

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