

EQUAL JUSTICE WORKS®



Ann Garcia
2017

RAICES
Fort Worth, TX

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ann is providing free legal services to vulnerable immigrants detained in ICE detention centers or in criminal custody in north Texas.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

North Texas is bearing the brunt of the growing emphasis by federal immigration authorities on interior enforcement efforts. The region led the nation in ICE arrests last year with more than 16,000 arrests. Immigrants who have access to representation are up to ten times more likely to establish a right to stay with their families and communities in the United States than immigrants who lack representation. Yet north Texas has the lowest rate of representation of any other metropolitan area in Texas.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

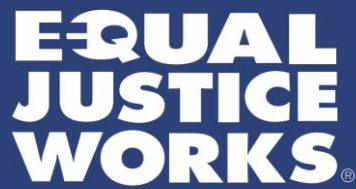
In the first six months, Ann has:

- Represented detained individuals in bond and removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review.
- Trained and mentored attorneys and law students growing their removal defense practice.
- Advised criminal defense attorneys on the immigration consequences of criminal convictions.
- Liaised with ICE and private detention center personnel to improve access to counsel, resolve issues with conditions of detention and bring instances of detainee mistreatment to light.
- Engaged with sheriffs to encourage them to stop participating in a voluntary program that deputizes local law enforcement to act as immigration agents.
- Collaborated with community partners to mount deportation defense campaigns.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Ann plans to:

- Grow the free or low-cost removal defense capacity in north Texas.
- Represent clients in bond and removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review and the Board of Immigration Appeals.
- Provide a legal lifeline to detained immigrants without access to counsel.
- Increase collaboration with community partners.
- Continue to hold ICE and private detention centers accountable.



Brettney Moore
2017

Beacon Law
Houston, TX

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Brettney will assist individuals on probation, in a diversion program, or recently released from detention to obtain civil legal services and social services to help them get out and stay out of the criminal justice system.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

Approximately one-fourth of Houston's population falls below the poverty line, and many are enmeshed in a cycle of detention, release, and return. Individuals coming out of detention often do not have access to services to help them maintain stability in the community. With Harris County's recent implementation of re-entry programs for detainees, it is more important than ever to further support these individuals in accessing resources to ensure they can support themselves upon release. By coupling their criminal diversion and treatment with civil legal assistance like ID restoration, social security representation, housing assistance, child support modification, and criminal history clearance, this project will facilitate access to employment, housing, and healthcare to reduce recidivism.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Brettney has:

- Conducted meetings with Reentry Division staff and case managers, community partners and other invested parties to establish goals, expectations and needs for successful collaboration.
- Initiated needs assessment interviews with current reentry program participants and started building a caseload for direct representation.
- Started developing Know Your Rights training for program participants.
- Taken on an initial test caseload of 29 clients addressing matters including housing, criminal history clearance, ID replacement, ID restoration, and access to public benefits.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Brettney plans to:

- Continue practice area training and development of relationships with community partners including Healthcare for the Homeless – Jail In-Reach Program, SEARCH Social Services, Texas Department of Public Safety, Crosswalk Center Reentry Services, and the Social Security Administration.
- Continue direct representation advocacy.
- Begin developing training curriculum for case management and probation services staff and synthesize a framework for reentry/discharge planning utilizing both detention services, legal services and community social services.
- Begin holding Know Your Rights training for program participants nearing release.

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Brittany Whittle
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Disability Rights Texas
San Antonio, TX

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Brittany advocates for parents and students to ensure that a student's race does not influence their special education identification, evaluation, placement and services through direct representation and systemic advocacy.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

Students of color are disproportionately identified for certain special education classifications, misidentified, and subject to more restrictive environments and disproportionate discipline than their similarly situated white peers. This issue is exacerbated in San Antonio because many school district lines have been drawn to increase economic and racial separation, concentrating the poorest students in districts with the fewest resources. Services available to white students are often unavailable to students of color. Additionally, San Antonio communities of color have been moving their students to new public charter schools at an increasing rate. Disability Rights Texas has had an influx of families reaching out for help with special education services in these charter schools, where families are encountering clear violations of both federal and state special education law.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

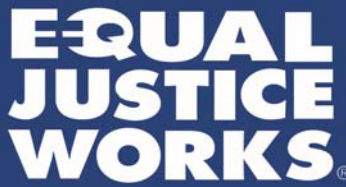
In the first six months, Brittany has:

- Represented 13 families, helping them advocate for their students and access appropriate evaluation, services, and supports.
- Created training curriculum for parents and community service providers focusing on the areas of Parental Rights and Special Education Policy in Texas.
- Filed four Due Process Hearing complaints addressing issues including restraint and seclusion, discipline, evaluation and child find.
- Collected and analyzed data on racial disproportionality for San Antonio school districts and implicit bias in the classroom.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Brittany plans to:

- Conduct community trainings in partnership with organizations serving Latino and African American families.
- Explore partnerships with organizations that have connections to parents with students in charter schools.
- Continue to compile and track racial disproportionality data.
- Complete specific research into the special education issues emerging in charter schools serving the African American and Latino communities in San Antonio.
- Represent 15 additional families, continue representation in current due process cases and file at least one additional due process complaint.



Camille Van Kote
2017

Cabrini Center
(Catholic Charities)
Houston, TX

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Camille provides family law representation to low-income immigrant women who have been victims of crime and is establishing a referral network to meet the victims' wide-ranging legal needs.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

Harris County is home to more than 500,000 undocumented immigrants. Access to legal resources for undocumented immigrants is often hindered by fear of deportation, distrust of law enforcement, miseducation and language barriers. Immigrant women who have become victims of domestic violence and other serious crimes since their arrival in the United States are faced with even more challenges that make them particularly vulnerable. Gaps in existing legal services pose hurdles that are extremely challenging to overcome. Without holistic representation that addresses their wide-ranging legal needs, these women are unable to move forward from their victimization.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

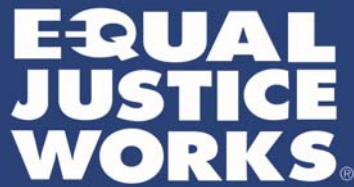
In the first six months, Camille has:

- Met with legal service providers and family law attorneys in the Houston area to discuss access to family law services for undocumented victims of crime.
- Conducted more than 30 intakes to identify the civil and family law legal needs of victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other serious crimes.
- Provided family law information during the Cabrini Center's open-community legal consultations three times per month.
- Initiated family law intakes to assist U Visa, T Visa and VAWA clients with their family law needs by providing agency or legal information and ensuring that clients are being zealously represented by their attorneys.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Camille plans to:

- Provide direct representation to more than five undocumented victims of crime in family law proceedings.
- Recruit family law attorneys to provide legal advice and pro bono representation.
- Organize a CLE in collaboration with other nonprofit legal service providers to share best practices for family law attorneys working with undocumented crime victims in the current administration.



**Cristian Sanchez
2017**

**RAICES
San Antonio, TX**

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cristian will represent immigrant populations that are newly in danger of immigration enforcement through community education, preparation, and direct representation.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

The way that immigration enforcement in this country is carried out has changed. Executive orders have drastically expanded who is considered an enforcement priority. These changes have resulted in individuals who previously felt relatively safe now being at risk of detention and deportation. For example, the administration has attempted to end the DACA program, and has ended Temporary Protected Status for many. These individuals and their families now face a range of unknowns. Many do not know their rights under the law or how to seek legal help. They likely have not prepared for the possibility of a family member being detained or deported, and do not know how to prepare. Furthermore, enforcement has appeared to expand at internal Border Patrol checkpoints. Many families who live south of these internal checkpoints have to cross the checkpoint to access better medical care, which can put them at risk of enforcement.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Cristian has:

- Screened and given legal advice and assistance to families crossing internal Border Patrol checkpoints.
- Organized and presented to different populations who are at risk of enforcement regarding their rights and the changing of their status.
- Collaborated with medical providers to offer presentations to doctors on the immigration system and policy and how it affects their immigrant patients.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Cristian plans to:

- Give more Know Your Rights presentations to underserved and diverse groups.
- Continue representing clients referred from medical providers and work with additional providers to increase referrals.
- Collaborate with more medical providers in underserved areas to provide information on the immigration system and policy and how it affects their immigrant patients.

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Daphne Wilson
2017

**Texas Legal Services
Center
Austin, TX**

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Daphne is introducing a legal checkup at the Austin Medical-Legal Partnership to specifically and systematically address the legal needs of underserved pregnant and non-pregnant patients of the new Center for Women's Health and their families in Central Texas.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

The People's Community Clinic expanded to include the Center for Women's Health (CWH) in April 2016. The CWH provides services to medically underserved women in Central Texas, including in the areas of prenatal care, family planning, well-woman, and other reproductive health needs. Medical care, however, is merely part of overall health and well-being. In fact, a 2015 study linked access to civil legal services to better community health. Although medical-legal partnerships have been shown to be effective in reducing the impact of health-harming legal issues, women have acute legal needs that may not be readily ascertainable through the traditional MLP model. Moreover, unmet legal needs for pregnant women can be especially harmful, as legal stress alone can be toxic to a woman and baby before, during, and after pregnancy. This project seeks to improve health by addressing unmet legal needs through integration of scheduled legal services within CWH medical care.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Daphne has:

- Provided brief advice, referrals, or direct representation to approximately 50 patient-clients.
- Begun a multi-faceted needs assessment of patients, healthcare providers, and legal service attorneys to determine the most appropriate legal topics to include in the final legal check-up.
- Completed an initial list of legal check-up topics to pilot in the most recent group visit cohort that includes pregnant patients scheduled to deliver in August or September 2018.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Daphne plans to:

- Finalize substantive legal issues to be included in legal check-up appointments.
- Train appropriate providers and staff on relevant substantive legal issues.
- Develop mechanism to track outcomes for pregnant patient-clients.
- Recruit pro bono attorneys to provide legal services for extensive needs that cannot be met through existing relationships.



Natalie Cadwalader-Schultheis
2017

South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR)
Harlingen, TX

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Natalie represents transition-age youth in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention, works with pro bono attorneys to improve transition-age youth's access to immigration legal services, and develops best practices and legal orientation materials for attorneys working with this population.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

While legal service providers have seen increases in funding for unaccompanied children that correspond to increased numbers of unaccompanied children, no such increased funding exists for adults. When an unaccompanied minor turns 18, they are transferred to adult detention, "aging-out" of many important legal protections as well as decreasing their ability to access critical legal resources. This project increases age-outs' access to representation while providing services sensitive to young adults' cognitive and developmental states that differ from that of older adults.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Natalie has:

- Developed a workshop presentation for youth recently transferred from unaccompanied minor shelters to adult ICE detention.
- Provided workshops to dozens of recently aged-out youth on how to request bond and what to expect in immigration court.
- Created training materials for pro bono attorneys representing recently aged-out youth in bond hearings.
- Provided direct representation and pro se assistance to six individual youths who were recently transferred to adult detention.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Natalie plans to:

- Train pro bono attorneys accepting cases for bond representation with newly developed bond orientation materials.
- Develop training materials for pro bono attorneys accepting cases for asylum representation.
- Continue providing workshops on bond and master calendar hearings to recently aged-out youth in the Port Isabel Detention Center.
- Continue to provide direct representation and pro se assistance to recently aged-out youth in ICE detention.

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**Rebecca Eisenbrey
2017**

**Equal Justice Center
Austin, TX**

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Rebecca protects the employment rights and civil rights of low-income Texans who are victims of Hurricane Harvey and/or who are vulnerable to employment abuses in the post-storm cleanup and reconstruction work, and protects the civil rights and jobs of low-income Texans striving to overcome criminal records, using direct advocacy and enforcement of federal, state, and local civil rights laws and employment laws.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

The employment barriers faced by people with a criminal record have impeded and disrupted families for generations, limiting individuals' ability to escape poverty and to support their families. Job applicants with a criminal record are routinely excluded from any further individual consideration. Furthermore, the background checks used by employers are often unreliable: the National Employment Law Project estimates that 1.8 million workers a year are subject to FBI background checks that include inaccurate or incomplete information. Affected low-income working Texans desperately need specialized legal advocates to help them enforce federal civil rights and employment laws, implement Austin's Fair Chance Hiring ordinance, advocate for similar ordinances in other cities, and secure fair consideration even where no specific ordinance is in place. In addition, Hurricane Harvey unexpectedly upended the lives of millions of residents of southeast Texas. In addition to destroying homes and property, the storm disrupted people's employment in myriad ways and created an environment ripe for worker exploitation.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Rebecca has:

- Collaborated with community organizations in Austin and Houston to host more than 10 Know Your Rights presentations on fair chance hiring and post-Harvey worker rights.
- Prepared and disseminated materials informing formerly incarcerated and storm-affected Texans of their employment rights.
- Provided advice and representation to storm-affected workers.
- Provided full representation to over 30 clients.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Rebecca plans to:

- Ramp up collaboration with established fair chance and reentry organizations.
- Continue legal rights outreach and community education.
- Increase direct representation of clients with criminal records.

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**Stephanie Champion
2017**

**Legal Aid of
NorthWest Texas
Dallas, TX**

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SIX-MONTH FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Stephanie equips local residents and community groups in West Dallas with legal tools and strategies to advocate for equitable development in their neighborhoods in order to enhance social and economic opportunity.

NEED ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

West Dallas is a low-income majority minority community with a long history of racism, poverty and neglect. Recently, West Dallas has seen rapid growth in development due to the 2012 opening of the \$93 million Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge which connects West Dallas to downtown. These new developments pose a serious threat to existing residents who have already begun to bear the brunt of the negative externalities that inevitably accompany development. With countless new projects in the works, it is imperative that the residents of West Dallas have a meaningful voice in the decision-making processes that affect their community so as to actively combat the negative effects of gentrification and ensure that new area development is responsible, equitable and accountable to them.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

In the first six months, Stephanie has:

- Conducted extensive outreach and established strong relationships with West Dallas residents and community groups.
- Held monthly community education presentations addressing upcoming developments and policy decisions affecting housing, community development and environmental justice in West Dallas.
- Provided legal advice and assistance to three emerging nonprofit organizations regarding organizational governance, legal formation and federal tax-exempt status.
- Represented a coalition of neighborhood groups to successfully oppose the expansion of an industrial facility adjacent to low-income single family residences.

WHAT'S NEXT

In the next six months, Stephanie plans to:

- Continue conducting outreach and community education workshops on issues related to fair housing, community development and environmental justice.
- Identify opportunities to engage in Community Benefits Agreements with housing developers and industrial facilities and represent community groups and coalitions in negotiating and drafting those agreements.
- Continue investigating relevant violations of local, state and federal law that have systemic impacts on low-income communities and begin engaging in litigation.