

Dear Members of the Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation,

Hello! My name is Alexandra Johnson, and I was lucky enough to have received a grant from the JJCF for my internship at the Legal Aid Society this summer. I am working as an Intern Investigator in the Queens borough office of the LAS, and this is my first interim report about my summer so far.

We began with a week of training at the Legal Aid Society headquarters in Manhattan with all of the summer LAS interns, where we walked through theories of defense, basic aspects of the criminal justice system, important penal codes, and best practices for interviewing witnesses and canvassing for video. We practiced taking a statement from a complaining witness and interviewing strangers, and we also got to hear about some of the extremely unique cases that the LAS has had the privilege of working on. We also attended an orientation at the Skadden Law Firm where prominent members of the LAS, such as its president, spoke to us about our upcoming summer.

After that week concluded, we each began reporting to our respective boroughs. All of the interns – both investigative and legal – begin the day by meeting with Mr. Michael Pineiro, our internship program coordinator, who checks in individually with each of us about our caseloads and informs us of other opportunities to enhance our internship experience, such as observing trial or arraignments. I am assigned to two investigators, Ms. Andrea Cherry and Mr. Ty Pope, who give me new cases every day to investigate with my partner intern, a rising senior at Carleton College. So far, the work we have done has ranged from photographing the locations of incidents, to conducting internet searches on the complaining witnesses, to canvassing for video surveillance in local establishments, to locating underage clients to ensure they show up to trial in order to avoid jumping charges, to looking for backdoor gambling locales in Flushing.

Every day presents a new set of challenges to which we must adapt, which keeps the internship incredibly refreshing and exciting, not to mention meaningful.

So far, I am immensely enjoying my time at the LAS, and I feel so passionate about the work the JJCF has allowed me to do there this summer. Thank you so much, and I will send my next interim report on July 31!

Best,

Alexandra Johnson