

Candidate

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] School of Law

Graduation (actual or expected): May 2021

Applying for other fellowships or clerkship: Yes

Primary Language: English

What other languages do you speak:

I am a native Spanish speaker.

Preferred Pronouns: she/her/hers

Proposal

Subject Area Classification:

Environmental Justice

Project and Target Population:

Defend the civil and housing rights of East LA Black and Latinx public housing residents impacted by industrial lead contamination, deploying litigation, local advocacy, and legal technical support.

Host Organization

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] org
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Information Supplied By Candidate

Part I. Project Description

Statement of Need

Thousands of Black and Latinx low-income children living in East Los Angeles (ELA) face unprecedented health challenges due to systematic lead contamination caused by one of the last remaining lead smelting facilities on the West Coast. Until its closure in 2015, Exide Technologies released over 7 million pounds of lead into the air and soil of approximately 10,000 homes—including 450 public housing units in ELA. Despite their close proximity to the facility, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (██████████) has relied on tenants' lack of political and legal power—especially among undocumented residents—to avoid conducting necessary cleanup of homes in the Estrada Courts housing projects, violating these residents' civil and housing rights and directly endangering their health. Soil sampling of neighboring homes have shown lead contamination levels of up to 928 parts per million (ppm). By comparison, US EPA classifies parcels with 1,000 ppm or more of lead in the soil as "toxic dumps."

In 2019, researchers at the University of Southern California found that children in ELA had the highest levels of lead exposure citywide, with lead in their teeth, brains, kidneys and bones. A separate study by the CDC found that Black children are nearly three times more likely than white children to have elevated blood-lead levels. Lead exposure can cause irreversible damage to the nervous system and impairment of hearing, speech, and cognition. These impacts exacerbate the effects of systemic poverty, wherein lead-poisoned children are seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.

Remediating these inequalities requires direct representation and legal support for residents seeking to challenge the historic land use decisions that transformed ELA into one of California's most polluted residential areas. Asserting residents' rights through a newly enacted state law—SB 1000—and the California Environmental Quality Act will ensure that future land use decisions decrease low-income families' environmental burdens and prioritize the building of parks, hospitals, and other needed resources.

This project places a lawyer who was raised in Estrada Courts at ██████████ (██████████). The placement of a culturally competent lawyer to lead this project will ensure that the health, rights, and dignity of those most impacted will have the tools necessary to achieve long-awaited justice.

Project Goals

This project consists of three main components: litigation, advocacy, and legal technical support for public housing residents in ELA.

I. Litigation:

a. Pursue affirmative impact litigation ██████████ ██████████

██████████—on behalf of Estrada Court residents, seeking to secure a court-mandated cleanup of ██████████ property. Claims will include:

- i. Federal Fair Housing Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act;
- ii. State Fair Employment and Housing Act, anti-discrimination claim under Cal. Gov. Code § 11135, breach of the implied warranty of habitability, and private and public nuisance.

II. Advocacy:

- a. Increase participation of Exide-impacted families in SB 1000 planning and ensure that new procedural rights under SB 1000 are respected by local governments. Advocacy will be geographically focused on the cities of Los Angeles, Huntington Park, and Bell, which are all located within a five-mile radius of the Exide facility.
- i. Work with local residents, with a special sub-focus of increasing partnerships with Black-led organizations in LA.
- b. Leverage new land use requirements under SB 1000 to reduce neighborhood industrial activity and increase opportunities for new parks, hospitals, and other public resources that improve public health.
- c. Preserve litigation strategies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by submitting written and oral comments at city council meetings. This engagement is critical to holistic protection from industrial projects proposed on a case-by-case basis.

III. Legal Technical Support:

- a. Provide "Know-Your-Rights" trainings to ensure that tenants can assert their rights to mold removal, pest control, and other entrenched habitability issues beyond lead contamination.
- i. Facilitate trainings with Black-led organizations.
- b. Collaborate with eviction defense attorneys to provide representation for tenants facing retaliation for raising habitability issues.

This project's impact will provide the foundation for an array of legal services which [REDACTED] is committed to continue providing beyond 2023. A staff attorney will continue the litigation and advocacy components and a community organizer will continue the trainings after my fellowship is completed. As a member of the impacted community, I am personally committed to continuing this work after completing my fellowship.

Two-Year Timeline

0-6 Months:

- Research federal and state civil rights and housing case law to develop litigation against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
- Conduct outreach to and develop relationships with Estrada Courts residents.
- Conduct follow-up interviews with potential clients.
- Attend and participate in SB 1000 meetings in the cities of Los Angeles, Huntington Park, and Bell to understand the policy landscape and assess scope of advocacy.
- Begin monitoring for proposed industrial projects in ELA and surrounding communities and submit oral and written comments on any proposed projects to preserve litigation strategies under CEQA.
- Attend community meetings at [REDACTED] to learn about the housing quality issues members face to ensure holistic Know-Your-Rights trainings.
- Meet with Black-led organizations in ELA and Southeast LA to understand their housing concerns and invite participation in SB 1000 advocacy.
- Begin collaborating with local eviction defense attorneys to represent families facing retaliation.

6 - 12 Months:

- Commence impact civil and housing rights litigation against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] on behalf of Estrada Courts residents.
- Convene meetings with city staff, elected officials, and community members in the pre-identified cities to advocate for health-protective SB 1000 policies. Follow-up with legal memoranda to provide specific recommendations.
- Continue monitoring for any proposed projects under CEQA, submit public comment as needed, and begin referring to pro bono attorneys.

- Create English and Spanish Know-Your-Rights trainings and tenants’ workshops on the rights to address lead contamination and other habitability issues.
 - o Conduct two workshops with adult membership and two workshops with youth members.
 - o Train a community organizer to co-facilitate.
- Follow-up with Black-led organizations with any resources or research requested.
- Collaborate with eviction defense attorneys to represent at least three families facing eviction due to retaliation.

12 - 18 Months: • Lead motion practice and engage pro bono attorneys.

- Train residents to provide public comment regarding SB 1000 and CEQA issues at city council meetings. Continue to submit oral comments at city council meetings and written comments as needed.
- Identify new cities in East and Southeast Los Angeles that will undergo the SB 1000 planning process in 2023 and adjust engagement strategies based on lessons learned in the first year.
- Continue monitoring the landscape of proposed projects under CEQA. Refer cases as needed.
- Provide four additional Know-Your-Rights trainings.
- Continue collaborating with eviction defense attorneys representing families facing retaliation.
- Continue working with Black-led organizations to conduct Know-Your-Rights trainings to their membership groups.

18 - 24 Months:

- Write briefs and work with pro bono attorneys to prepare for trial.
- Continue submitting comment letters and engaging Exide-impacted residents to finalize SB 1000 policies in the cities of Los Angeles, Huntington Park, and Bell.
- Attend SB 1000 meetings in newly identified cities and submit public comment and letters. Engage and train additional residents in this process.
- Develop a best practices guide to continue monitoring proposed industrial projects developing oral and written comments under CEQA.
- Continue collaborations with pro bono attorneys and [REDACTED] attorneys to sustain engagement after fellowship is over.
- Continue eviction defense representation with an aim of representing at least 10 families by the end of fellowship.
- Support state legislative efforts regarding the Exide cleanup as necessary.
- Create educational materials for community members and a training handbook for staff and advocates on legal and policy lessons learned.

Distinction Between Project and Existing Services

There are no services currently provided that address the need of the community to be served.

Community Collaboration

This project will collaborate with East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ). EYCEJ organizes in both Black and Latinx communities in ELA and is co-directed by Black and Latinx staff. EYCEJ has committed to working with and supporting all of my project’s components. Furthermore, I will reach out to other Black-led organizations in Los Angeles, including Black Women for Wellness, Inner City Struggle, and Black Lives Matter-LA to increase participation in SB 1000 advocacy within their organizations.

I will also partner with the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation’s Housing and Communities team to develop tenant workshops and further increase access to legal counseling by specialized housing attorneys.

California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), a statewide, community-led coalition of grassroots organizations, of which [REDACTED] is a core member, has also agreed to collaborate with my project. CEJA successfully advocated for the passage of SB 1000 in 2016 and has a strong interest in ensuring the implementation of the

law in my target community. I will coordinate with CEJA to ensure effective regional advocacy, provide recommendations on legislative changes, and support advocacy efforts where needed to improve land use policies that impact public housing and environmental justice communities.

I will additionally coordinate with the Los Angeles Department of Public Health to connect families in Estrada Courts with medical, educational, and social services to mitigate the impacts of suspected lead poisoning in children.

Potential Sponsor Involvement

There are multiple ways a sponsor could support this project.

First, this project would welcome the involvement and support of pro bono attorneys who could serve as co-counsel on an impact litigation lawsuit against [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] or in eviction defense cases. I would also welcome support from pro bono attorneys who could serve as lead counsel on CEQA cases. Those who have taken on previous cases can share their experiences and help develop training materials for future pro bono counsel, including by providing technical assistance and guidance on publishing and disseminating these guides.

Second, a sponsor can assist by providing graphic design support that could enhance community outreach materials, Know-Your-Rights trainings, and any guides that I will create as part of the project. Third, sponsors can help increase awareness of the project by participating in social media campaigns, providing access to media outlets, and drafting outreach and publicity materials. Lastly, any sponsor in the Los Angeles area can also assist in local land use advocacy by providing oral or written comments at public hearings.

Candidate Pro Bono Experience

For two years prior to law school, I worked as a litigation assistant at Earthjustice, where I gained significant experience working with pro bono attorneys from Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger. I participated in meetings with pro bono attorneys regarding case deadlines and litigation strategies; communicated with firm paralegals and attorneys; and worked closely with pro bono attorneys to file briefs with the courts. For example, while working on the case, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice v. City of Moreno Valley, I communicated directly with the attorneys on brief timelines, prepared trial materials, and arranged settlement meetings with opposing counsel.

During my 1L summer at [REDACTED] I also worked closely with a solo practitioner providing pro bono legal representation in [REDACTED] v. South Coast Air Quality Management District. I worked with this attorney to brainstorm litigation strategies, provide technical support, compile appendices, and file appellate briefs.

Working with attorneys in diverse settings has prepared me well for the task of engaging pro bono attorneys in my project.

Part II. Candidate's Personal Statement

Personal Statement

My parents emigrated from rural Mexico to the United States in 1989—crossing by foot through the Sonora desert, under the scorching heat by day and the bitter cold by night. After an arduous weeklong journey, they arrived in Los Angeles with nothing more than a backpack. By immigrating to a foreign country, my parents made an enormous sacrifice to ensure that my siblings and I would be afforded a better quality of life and access to higher education.

Despite their tireless efforts to provide for us, the cycle of poverty has meant that I have lived most of

my life in public housing. I grew up seeing rodents in my kitchen, breathing mold and lead paint in my bedroom, and seeing countless young children carry inhalers for asthma and other chronic illnesses. As a young athlete, I inhaled deeply polluted air while training for marathons, running past meat-processing plants, industrial recycling facilities, and rail yards just outside my home. I became accustomed to breathing in the acrid stench of smoldering animal carcasses and toxic chemicals.

Since moving to Estrada Courts, I began noticing that many of my classmates in middle school had difficulty concentrating in class every day. Some were falling behind in algebra, science, and reading, and others faced disciplinary issues. I now know that these issues are attributable to living in lead-contaminated homes—an invisible curse that my peers and I had no awareness of and no ability to control.

It was not until pursuing an environmental studies major as an undergraduate that I began to understand how the dangerous housing conditions I grew up in were responsible for the dismal health conditions affecting my community. This newfound knowledge led me to my first internship at [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) in 2014. During my first week on the job, I learned about the Exide Technologies facility and the decades of systematic invisible poisoning of my community. I also began worrying about what the effects of lead contamination could mean to my 13-year old sister, who has lived her whole life in Estrada Courts, and the other children in similar situations who were being poisoned through no fault of their own. I quickly became inspired by how the organization's lawyers uplifted the voices of those often sidelined by the legal system—indigenous, Black, Latinx, queer, and youth. This community-based lawyering approach showed me how I could use my education and my lived experience to fight for the rights and dignity my community deserves.

As a bilingual daughter of undocumented immigrants, I will continue to leverage my education and my deep personal connection to fight against the political, educational, and financial barriers the legal system has placed on my community and others like it. As a young attorney, I will work to advance the right of future generations—no matter their family's income, race, or national origin—to grow up in a habitable and healthy environment. I will ensure that children like my 13-year old sister—who today have no choice but to play in lead-contaminated soil—have the right to self-determination.

Information Supplied by Host Organization

Part I. Host Organization Background

Total Number of Attorneys on Staff

4

Previous Experience Hosting Equal Justice Works Fellows

Yes, we have experience hosting fellows.

Pro Bono Experience

█████ collaborates consistently with co-counsel outside of the organization. However, █████ has rarely worked with pro bono attorneys at firms. Most firms with environmental practices have been conflicted out of offering pro bono assistance because █████ regularly sues the municipalities, oil companies, and large developers that firms represent or counsel. Instead, █████ collaborates with co-counsel who work on contingency, relying on fee recovery through the prevailing party provisions of California law, or the federal environmental laws' fee provisions. However, if we could find a firm that did not conflict out, we would be thrilled to bring additional legal resources to our community.

Part II. Candidate Relationship with Host Organization

Candidate Experience at Host Organization

This organization has witnessed █████ growth as an environmental advocate over the years, and she has been fully integrated and influential in our organization's culture. Shana Lazerow, Legal Director at █████ first met █████ in 2014 as a rising junior at Wellesley College interning with █████ organizing team. █████ helped facilitate █████ Youth Summer Training Program and planned rallies to build momentum for the closure of the Exide facility. It was during this internship when █████ first learned about Exide, which motivated her to attend law school and is at the heart of her project. She returned to █████ again in 2015 to work under the guidance of the then-staff attorney, Gladys Limon.

Most recently, █████ interned at █████ during her 1L summer in 2019 where she conducted legal research on strategies to hold Exide accountable. Senior attorney Jennifer Ganata and Ms. Lazerow have worked closely with █████ in developing her project. Since 2014, █████ has consistently stayed involved in █████ campaigns and stayed in touch with staff.

█████ also knows █████ through the eyes of some of our partner organizations. As a litigation assistant at Earthjustice, she handled litigation and engaged in policy advocacy where █████ was a client. Her perspective and vast experience working in the environmental field are crucial to understanding how █████ and this project fit into a broader movement for environmental justice.

Part III. Project Background

Conception of Project and Its Relationship to Mission of Host Organization

Founded in 1978 in California, [REDACTED] mission is to build people's power in California's low-income communities of color to achieve environmental health and justice by preventing and reducing pollution and by building sustainable communities and environments. Our work focuses on building power and responding to the needs of low-income Black and Latinx communities of Richmond and East Oakland in Northern California, and of Southeast Los Angeles and Wilmington in Southern California. For decades, [REDACTED] has been the organization that low-income community members trust. We have committed to working with our members to address environmental racism with a specific focus on "Black and Brown Unity." As part of that effort, we are moving intentionally to dismantle the entrenched anti-Blackness that pervades society, contributing to shorter lifespans and disproportionate rates of homelessness, police violence, and exposure to toxins among our Black community members. Implementing the trust our members place in us, [REDACTED] is committed to empowering Black and Latinx communities to support each other in addressing environmental racism.

Since 2005, [REDACTED] has partnered with Southeast Los Angeles residents to advocate for the closure of the Exide facility, and since 2013 we have been advocating for a safe and quick cleanup of community members' homes. Through many years of advocacy, [REDACTED] has been able to ensure more than \$1 billion in state funding is available to cleanup homes contaminated by Exide. Unfortunately, less than 20% of these homes have been cleaned up within the past 5 years, none of which are in public housing. [REDACTED] project fits within our expertise and expands [REDACTED] work to ensure that all families impacted by the Exide contamination receive proper and safe cleanup of their homes.

Lack of access to basic information about legal systems is among the injustices [REDACTED] members face. Significant legal resources are spent building the capacity of our community members. This proposed fellowship allows us to fulfill our goal by remaining as responsive to residents as possible, and extending our legal capacities to an essential forward-thinking and longer term project.

Part IV. Supervisor Information

Supervisor's Expertise in Project Subject Area

Shana Lazerow, [REDACTED] Legal Director, has extensive experience in public interest and environmental law. She joined [REDACTED] as Chief of Litigation in 2005 after five years of federal litigation, primarily under the Clean Water Act, and after teaching at Stanford's environmental law clinic. At [REDACTED] she has litigated and advised communities on many of the federal environmental laws. She has also developed expertise in California's laws, including CEQA, Proposition 65, and the rules established by local air districts to regulate stationary sources of air pollution.

[REDACTED] senior attorney in Southern California, Jennifer Ganata, will also support [REDACTED] in her fellowship. Jennifer has over 7 years of experience litigating both land use and eviction defense cases in environmental justice communities. She has experience developing habitability cases in low-income units throughout the Los Angeles area, similar to the case [REDACTED] proposes.

Supervisor's Experience Managing Staff

Shana Lazerow has almost two decades of experience managing staff. In 2001, she founded a small teaching clinic at San Francisco Baykeeper and supervised an EJW Fellow (Sejal Choksi, 2002-2004), who went on to become the Executive Director of San Francisco Baykeeper. At [REDACTED] as of fall 2020, she supervises three full time attorneys, a fellow, and seasonal legal interns. She received management training at [REDACTED] Since 2005, Shana has supervised a legal team of up to six full time attorneys and up to four interns. Among the fellows she has supervised, all have continued on to pursue successful public interest and public service careers.

Co-supervisor Jennifer Ganata has over 7 years of experience supervising summer and term clerks. Jennifer and Shana have both mentored many fellows and young attorneys, placing a premium on not only respecting but also collaborating effectively with low-income community members and community organizers.

Supervisor's Proposed Interaction with Fellow

██████████ would be a fellow in our Southern California office based in Huntington Park, under the supervision of the Legal Director, Shana Lazerow, who sits in the Richmond office. She would have individual check-ins with Shana on a weekly basis and be able to obtain daily guidance from her co-supervisor Jennifer Ganata. ██████████ would also participate in weekly legal team meetings and weekly community-based team meetings. On a small legal team, we view close collaboration and communication as critical parts of our ability to serve our community.

[REDACTED]

EDUCATION

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Expected May 2021
J.D. Candidate
Specializations: [REDACTED] Program in Public Interest Law and Policy
Critical Race Studies Program
Honors: [REDACTED] Environmental Fellowship
Mexican-American Bar Foundation Scholarship Recipient
Beverly Hills Bar Foundation Scholarship Recipient
[REDACTED] Environmental Law Section Diversity and Inclusion Fellow
California Change Lawyers 1L Scholarship Recipient
Activities: [REDACTED] Law Fellows Program Mentor (2019 and 2020)
Delegate to the 25th U.N. Conference of the Parties Climate Negotiations in Madrid,
Spain
1L Representative, Womyn of Color Collective

We [REDACTED] May 2016
B.A. in Environmental Studies, Health and Society Minor
Honors: [REDACTED] Prize in Health and Society
[REDACTED] Prize in Environmental Activism
[REDACTED] Scholarship
Student Library Research Award
Provost's Office Student Research Grant Recipient
Study Abroad: School for International Training, Public Health in Urban Environments, Argentina
Wintersession in the Southern Balkans, Anthropology, Greece

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice | Los Angeles, CA September 2019–Present
Volunteer Law Clerk
Conduct legal research on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and property law. Coordinate Green Zones policy committee of community members and staff. Wrote comment letter on LA County draft Green Zones ordinance. Created an introductory curriculum on the clean energy sector to build advocacy capacity among community members. Researched housing and land use laws to support an affordable housing campaign; authored a detailed policy guide for the campaign. Organized with EYCEJ as a community member since 2015.

Center for Biological Diversity | Oakland, CA May 2020–July 2020
Urban Wildlands Summer Law Clerk
Drafted CEQA comment letters on proposed mega development projects in California. Conducted legal research and drafted memo on guidance changes to the National Environmental Policy Act. Conducted outreach to potential environmental justice partners in Los Angeles to provide legal support.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] January 2020–May 2020
Student Attorney
Conducted research on the Good Neighbor Provision of the federal Clean Air Act for client organization WildEarth Guardians. Collected baseline and annual progress data on the Southwestern region's air quality and oil and gas production. Collaborated with undergraduate students to investigate the oil and gas industry in New Mexico.

May 2019–August 2019

████████████████████ | ████████████████████
Summer Law Clerk

Authored a legal memorandum on strategies for holding a local metal recycling plant accountable for toxic soil contamination in a neighboring residential community and facilitated a community forum in Spanish with U.S. E.P.A representatives on the status of facility’s cleanup. Created bilingual infographics for community members. Developed expertise on bankruptcy law and state environmental laws. Proofread and cite checked court filings.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Earthjustice | Los Angeles, CA

July 2016–July 2018

Litigation Assistant

Interviewed scientific experts, drafted client declarations and court pleadings, and conducted investigations on potential and existing cases. Strengthened collaborations with existing non-legal partners on community lawyering strategies, represented Earthjustice in national conferences on environmental justice. Led initiatives to increase the diversity of the hiring pool and foster an inclusive workplace.

June 2015–August 2015

████████████████████ | ████████████████████
Legal Assistant

Prepared and reviewed discovery materials in evidentiary proceedings for ongoing litigation, conducted factual research on neighborhood oil drilling in South Los Angeles. Formatted briefs and proofread documents for staff attorneys.

June 2014–August 2014

Community Organizing Intern

Facilitated a six-week youth summer program with over 35 participants, ages 13-20. Planned community outreach events for electric and hybrid car rebate program, prepared youth and Spanish-speaking community members to provide public comments at five governmental agency meetings, organized a demonstration with over 200 participants in coalition with three community-based groups.

September 2013–May 2016

████████████████████
Homework Tutor

Directed twice-weekly tutoring sessions for traditionally underrepresented high school students and communicated with the Program’s academic director. Recruited and trained undergraduate tutors.

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Fluent in Spanish. National Lawyers Guild Legal Observer. Five-time Los Angeles Marathon finisher.

Dear Fellowship Committee:

I am enthusiastically writing to support Ms. [REDACTED] application for an Equal Justice Works Fellowship. My role at [REDACTED] is Senior Staff Attorney and I have worked at [REDACTED] for 7 years. I had the pleasure to supervise [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] while she did her 2019 summer legal internship. For over 10 weeks in the summer [REDACTED] came in to work on cases with me at [REDACTED]. From time to time, [REDACTED] continues to volunteer her time at [REDACTED] and we remain in close contact to discuss different environmental justice issues and campaigns she is currently working on in the community.

[REDACTED] is one of the preeminent environmental justice organizations in the nation. The mission of [REDACTED] is to build people's power in California's communities of color and low-income communities to achieve environmental health and justice by preventing and reducing pollution and building green, healthy and sustainable communities and environments. [REDACTED] provides residents in blighted and heavily polluted urban communities in California with organizing skills, leadership training and legal, scientific and technical assistance, so that they can successfully confront threats to their health and well-being.

I have been a Senior Staff Attorney at [REDACTED] for the last 2 years and I was at [REDACTED] from 2007 to 2012 in the capacity as a youth organizer and legal fellow. [REDACTED] also is a returning member to the [REDACTED] team, she worked with [REDACTED] throughout different times in her undergraduate career. Before [REDACTED] started her legal internship at [REDACTED] I was told she previously interned at [REDACTED] with both the research and community organizing department in the Southern California office. As someone who has been both a community organizer and an attorney at [REDACTED] I found [REDACTED] experience at [REDACTED] to be evidence of her commitment to fighting for environmental justice. I have supervised many law students in the last 10 years and this was the first time that I felt I was working with someone who understood both the importance of social movements and advocacy in the legal system. I believe having an organizing background shapes a very unique attorney, one who is able to connect on the ground community issues directly to legal issues. [REDACTED] proposed project also reflects her commitment to a community lawyering model.

In the years I practiced outside of [REDACTED] I worked as a housing attorney in Los Angeles doing eviction defense as well as land use. I approached eviction defense with an environmental justice lens and was able see the overlap of environmental injustice and housing injustice. I saw how the impacts of redlining policies in Los Angeles still have environmental justice impacts today. I often worked up cases identifying issues of habitability in low income units. Many low-

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income families renting in Los Angeles are forced into housing markets that may not have the best living conditions. Throughout Los Angeles, tenants who are paying below market rate prices for a place to live are required to live alongside vermin and in unabated lead painted walls. The amount of neglect I saw in public housing units were deeply troubling. I shared some of my experience with ██████ when she worked with me. I quickly learned that she grew up in public housing and could relate to the descriptions I shared with her. Not only was the public housing project she lived in sandwiched between polluting freeways and multiple polluting industrial facilities, there were issues of lead contamination by the Exide facility. ██████ made it clear to me her motivation to seek out a career fighting for environmental justice is to ensure communities like the one she grew up in would have a voice in environmental decisions and would be able to defend against environmental injustice. ██████ career choice reflects her understanding that the local struggle of environmental justice is part of a larger systemic issue where housing injustice intersects with environmental injustice.

Addressing the intersection of housing and environmental justice is much needed now more than ever, particularly in California where there is a housing crisis as well as being at the forefront of the climate crisis. The work that ██████ will embark on will address how social justice issues do not have simple solutions but require the utilization of different resources and advocacy tools. My years as a housing attorney in Los Angeles as well as my desire to fight environmental injustice will help ██████ develop a strong environmental and housing justice practice. I believe the work that ██████ wants to do in the environmental justice field is important and necessary and it is ██████ drive that will help her make this project a success. ██████ – through ██████ – will be able to provide access to justice that has not previously existed. Her project proposes something more than direct legal services, and seeks to connect housing issues in low income communities of color to the larger environmental justice movement.

I believe that ██████ is committed to fighting for environmental justice. She is highly organized and methodical in the work she does. Her desire to learn and think critically also indicates to me that she will be a great community lawyer. The environmental law profession needs more people like ██████ Given the knowledge I have about ██████ I wholeheartedly endorse her as a fellowship recipient. The fellowship will allow ██████ to carve out further develop the field of law that looks at how environmental justice intersects with housing justice. Without hesitation, I recommend ██████ as a fellowship recipient. Please feel free to contact me directly at (323)683-8844 should you wish to discuss her qualifications or performance in further detail.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jennifer Ganata

Jennifer Ganata
Senior Staff Attorney



[REDACTED] is exactly the kind of person the Equal Justice Works Fellowship should support. I know that she would make you proud if you decide to award her a fellowship. She will be a great public interest lawyer and advocate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]