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[Legal Fellowship Awards Supports Veterans Advocacy Project at UJC](#)



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Brooklyn Law School graduate Coco Culhane has been awarded an Equal Justice Works Fellowship which will allow the continuation of her work establishing New York City's first comprehensive legal services program for low-income veterans with mental illness, a new initiative of the Urban Justice Center's renowned Mental Health Project.

The initiative, known as the Veteran Advocacy Project, provides an unprecedented range of legal services to the city's many low-income veterans living with mental illnesses including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and depression.

"New York City has over 250,000 veterans – and many are living with mental illness," says Coco Culhane. "When these veterans face legal challenges, such as eviction or an improper termination of food stamps, it drastically increases the risk that they will spiral further into illness, become homeless, or even commit suicide. I am deeply honored and grateful to receive this award, which will allow me to continue helping veterans to rebuild their lives."

"There is a common misconception that veterans are automatically taken care of by the VA and other agencies, but that is simply not the case," says Eve Stotland, Director of the Mental Health Project at the Urban Justice Center. "Even for qualified veterans, obtaining the care they need and deserve can be a complicated, lengthy process. The Mental Health Project has worked for years to advocate for clients with mental illness, and we are thrilled to be able to extend our services to this community of veterans."

The fellowship allows Culhane, who has been conducting the project on a volunteer basis for the past year, to assist clients in obtaining the basic necessities of life: housing (preventing eviction and homelessness, finding supportive housing), medical care (ensuring access to health care and mental health treatment), and income (helping clients appeal denials from programs such as Food Stamps and Social Security).

Culhane graduated from Brooklyn Law School in 2010, where she acted as Symposium Editor for the Brooklyn Law Review and received numerous honors, including a BLPSI Public Interest Fellowship. Her previous legal experience includes work with the New York Legal Assistance Group, the New York State Attorney General's Office, Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, Legal Aid's Health Law Unit, and South Brooklyn Legal Services, where she was a 2010 Equal Justice America Fellow. Culhane also served as Culture Editor and Assistant Editor at The New Republic from 2001-2007.

The Equal Justice Works postgraduate fellowship provides opportunities for talented attorneys who are passionate about public interest law to implement new legal projects that serve communities in desperate need of legal assistance. Culhane's fellowship is sponsored by CIGNA and Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP.