

## ALI NICOLETTE '16 (Disability Rights California)



Why should a student do LfA?

Although your placement hires you with the knowledge that you are a law student, your supervising attorneys will hold you to the standard of a first-year associate. Continuing on that presumption, your work product should be equivalent to a second or third year associate by the time you pass the bar. Your growth as an attorney will start during your third year of law school, and continue while you await your bar results. In addition, you will have almost more than a year of specific substantive and procedural legal knowledge before you are even sworn in. Not only does this increase your credibility, but you will have a set of uniquely marketable skills that you can highlight in interviews in the event that your placement does not result in permanent employment. Because I had extensive procedural and substantive knowledge from my fellowship, my supervisors assigned me an administrative writ and resulting attorneys' fees motion, and I successfully argued

my first motion in Superior Court, during my first year as an attorney. Feel free to contact me with questions about LfA, or if you are interested in disability civil rights. My practice focuses on systemic advocacy and impact litigation at the federal level for access to Medicaid benefits, as well as direct representation at the state level in appealing denials/terminations of community-based services and support for people with disabilities, both in administrative hearings and Writs of Mandamus. You can reach me at [ali.nicolette@disabilityrightscal.org](mailto:ali.nicolette@disabilityrightscal.org).

## MICHAEL ZITANI '17 (Berkeley City Attorney)

Let's not beat around the bush. LfA is a scary commitment. It is intense, challenging, time consuming, and intimidating. It is an entire fellowship program built on the basic premise of "Let's make law students better lawyers by spending 3L year being lawyers!" And that's all before you even take the Bar!

But if you are reading this, I'm guessing you at least have an instinct of why it's worth it. LfA is a chance to do real good in your community, and enact positive change in the lives of others. It's an opportunity to work with amazing, hilarious, and incredibly talented people who are genuinely interested in helping you become the best lawyer you can be. Most of all, it is a fantastic learning experience about the law, what kind of lawyer you want to be, and what kind of person you want to be while doing it.

Besides, if you're sharp enough to be at Hastings, and motivated enough to seek out and read this, I bet you can handle any challenge LfA throws at you. If an oddball like me was able to do this working 32 hours a week my 3L year, study for and pass the Bar on my first try, and now work full time my second year while planning my wedding, I know you can not only survive, but thrive in Lawyers for America. Give it a shot.



## **ROSS MIDDLEMISS'18 (Center for Biological Diversity)**



LfA has provided me the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field of environmental law alongside some of the field's most talented attorneys. The fellowship has allowed me to get out of the classroom and join the fight for environmental protection in a moment when the fight has never been more important. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

## **AZUCENA CRESPO '18 (Solano County Public Defender):**

Getting a paid public defender job in the Bay Area is nearly impossible straight out of Law School. Volunteering for up to 6 months without pay just wasn't an option for me with such high rent prices in the Bay Area. It's a serious relief 3L year to already have a paid position lined up.

It's also been a really great learning experience. Being in one office for over a semester has given me a better opportunity to regularly make court appearances, improve my writing and find mentors than I would have had if I was just interning.