My Policy Fellowship Reflection | Abigail Piña Dahilig

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Written by: Questions?

Before starting my fellowship, I had experience doing paid contract work with Voices. The projects I supported were in juvenile justice and immigrant family policies. Over the past year, as part of my fellowship, I worked on the same issues in greater detail, which led to creative, collaborative work surrounding Voices and other local organizations.

One of the most meaningful moments of this fellowship was getting to advocate and produce content surrounding both the 9th and 10th Anniversaries of the DACA program. During this time, I co-wrote a blog post with my colleague, and overall I was able to immerse myself deeper into the workings of the program I would not have otherwise known for example, Utah alone has an estimated 10,000 DACA recipients. Being able to familiarize myself with the number of DACA recipients in our state gave me the tools and information I needed to speak on this issue to leaders like Representative Moore. Advocating for H.R.6, The Dream and Promise Act exposed me to the importance of collective work and coalition work. UtahDACA is a resource I am proud to share; this website is the product of a larger historic collaborative effort. The site is a one-stop resource page providing local resources and immigration updates brought together by several Utah universities, immigrant nonprofits, law firms, and the Mexican Consulate of Salt Lake City.

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My biggest project was co-coordinating our DACA Renewal Fund by assisting nearly 100 DACA recipients in obtaining funding for their renewal. One initiative I was able to help with before I finished my fellowship was a collaboration with the Dream Centers at The University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College. The DACA Renewal Funding Request Form was created to facilitate DACA renewal funding to Utah DACA recipients, especially those at the colleges.

This fellowship has given me way more than just policy and advocacy experience. I am leaving this endeavor with a better idea of how non-profit organizations run and knowing I have advanced my professional and personal development. I am thankful for the experience, confidence, and knowledge I have gained through Voices for Utah Children.

With gratitude, always.

Abigail Piña Dahilig

Policy Fellow

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