

Summer Associates Team Up With the Truth, Hope & Justice Initiative to Drive Systemic Change

Pro Bono Highlight
May 31, 2024
Foster Garvey Newsroom

Contact

Eryn Karpinski Hoerster
Kelly A. Mennemeier

Foster Garvey attorneys, including a group of its summer associates, and key partner organizations teamed up on a criminal justice reform project to create a new research database on settlements and verdicts in police brutality cases throughout the United States.

The Foster Garvey team worked with the [Law Firm Antiracism Alliance](#) (LFAA), an organization that brings together law firms and legal services organizations to provide a platform for communities oppressed by racism. Leveraging the collective resources of the private bar, LFAA uses the law as a vehicle for change benefiting communities of color and to promote racial equity.

One of the ways the LFAA does so is to source staffing for pro bono projects with non-profit organizations, such as the [Truth, Hope & Justice Initiative](#), a charitable effort designed to mobilize and support mothers from across the country who have lost loved ones to police violence.

Foster Garvey connected with the Truth, Hope & Justice Initiative as a means of engaging its 2022 summer associates in a timely pro bono project that would unite all of them through a shared goal. This project provided opportunity for each one to gain meaningful hands-on experience and exercise their legal research skills to advance an important cause. To help the Truth, Hope & Justice Initiative build its police brutality database, the Foster Garvey team reviewed large amounts of data regarding outcomes in police brutality cases. For each case, a team member prepared a summary of the case and identified important pieces of data including the plaintiffs' asserted claims, the size of the final award, and the demographics of the officers

Summer Associates Team Up With the Truth, Hope & Justice Initiative to Drive Systemic Change



and victims.

[Kelly Mennemeier](#) (Litigation Associate, Seattle) led the team of summer associates, and [Eryn Karpinski Hoerster](#) (Litigation Principal, Portland) provided additional supervision and helped review case summaries. The summer associates who participated in this project and who are now attorneys at the firm are [Kate Bradley](#) (Labor, Employment & Immigration Associate, Seattle), [Julia Doherty](#) (Litigation Associate, Seattle) and [Anthony Godwin](#) (Real Estate, Land Use & Environmental Associate, Seattle). Each summer associate worked with their legal assistants and the legal research team at Foster Garvey to collect and review case-related materials.

The summer associates appreciated the opportunity to collaborate on a larger matter and to gain a deeper understanding of the importance placed on pro bono at the firm. They also gained exposure to aspects of case research not typically covered in law school legal research courses.

The overall project in which the Foster Garvey team participated led to the creation of a searchable database covering information on civil rights lawsuits filed against the City of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department since 2000. The database is now available to help predict and improve outcomes in civil rights litigation going forward, as attorneys can more easily discover analogous cases, helping to drive overall systemic reform.