

DePaul University
Asylum & Immigration Clinic

Lhesly Fernandez

*Staff Attorney at the National Immigrant
Justice Center*

Lhesly M. Fernández is a Staff Attorney with NIJC's Legal Orientation Program (LOP) in the Detention Project, where she provides pro bono removal defense to detainees before the Chicago Detained Court. Lhesly received her J.D. from DePaul College of Law. During law school, she focused on immigration law by accepting a fellowship with California Rural Legal Assistance through Equal Justice Works, participating in DePaul's Asylum and Immigration Clinic, attending the Clinic's Spring Break Border Project, and interning with NIJC's Detention Project. Prior to law school, Lhesly graduated from San Francisco State University with a bachelor's degree in International Relations and Latin America Foreign Policy.

*Clinic Participation:
2017-2018*

*Graduated:
2019*

What do you remember most about your time in the Clinic?

The clients and my fellow clinic students.

What lessons from the clinic do you still use today or have used in your professional career?

The biggest lesson that I took from the Clinic is to be prepared! I still use agendas prior to meetings with supervisors or clients. I also use a lot of the client interviewing skills that we were taught during the clinic.

How did your involvement with the clinic help you connect with other professionals in the field?

Many of the people I work with now were Clinic alumni as well, and it has provided me with a way to connect with them since we share similar experiences at the Clinic.

What would you tell current or future DePaul law students about the clinic?

It's worth the work!

Is there anything else you would like to share about your clinic experience?

My experience at the Clinic solidified my resolve to practice Immigration Law. The experiential learning, access to clients and the instruction we received provided me with foundational skills to succeed in my practice, which are skills that I use to this day.