Northwest Immigrant Rights Project | www.nwirp.org

- Nicole Schilling (Economics, Spanish, 2015)
- General Intake Intern
- Full-time, 40 hours per week
- Unpaid but receiving Career Center Internship Grant

What do you do as an intern at this organization?
I conduct intake interviews with immigrants to screen for their eligibility for legal status, or to determine what sort of immigration help they are looking for. These interviews are often over the phone and in Spanish. After the interview, I prepare their case and documents and then present their information to my supervisor. We review their family, immigration, personal, and criminal information to see if our organization can help them apply for legal status.

How did you find your internship?
I looked at the University of Washington School of Law’s online resources for their own JD students who are looking for pro bono work or volunteer opportunities.

What do you enjoy most about your internship?
I feel that my work is relevant and greatly needed. The problems facing and being caused by Central American immigrants to the United States appear daily in the newspaper. My internship allows me a front line understanding of the problem as I communicate directly with some of these immigrants. I also feel that the work I do is greatly needed. Immigrants facing deportation proceedings rarely have access to legal representation. By working at NWIRP, I am one of the few people who are trying to help them be heard.

What do you find challenging?
As part of screening for a person’s eligibility for legal status, I need to hear the reasons that prompted an immigrant to leave his or her country. The reasons often involve gang extortion, violence, and rape. These personal accounts of extreme hardship and suffering are difficult to handle day after day.

What advice would you offer to someone who wants to make the most of an internship like yours?
The general intake unit is frequently in need of volunteer help. Someone looking to intern should contact NWIRP a few months ahead of when they would like to intern and ask to speak to the general intake coordinator. I have learned the most during my internship from talking with interns and law students who have been here longer than me. They have been in my position and are easily approachable.

About the Organization
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
Seattle, WA

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project promotes justice for low-income immigrants by pursuing and defending their legal status. We focus on providing direct legal services, supported by our education and public policy work.