

Savannah Gazda

RefugeeOne

During the summer of 2022, I interned at a non-profit organization named RefugeeOne. RefugeeOne is a refugee resettlement service in Chicago, Illinois that focuses on providing refugees with the resources, skills, and support they need in order to live a happy, healthy, and successful life in the United States. This experience was extremely eye-opening as I had the opportunity to learn about the inner-workings of a non-profit organization and how they operate.

My official title was a Case Manager Intern; however, I was able to do so much more than that. One of my main responsibilities was determining the allocation of different funds and grants in order to pay for bills, groceries, and rent for the refugees. The organization operates under a 90-day Resettlement and Placement program, which allows each refugee to receive a calculated amount of funds (managed by the non-profit organization) on top of the funds and grants given to the organization to pay for these costs. It was my responsibility to create the disbursement vouchers and, based on the criteria of the expense, decide which fund or source of money would pay for the expense. This experience was eye-opening because I have always been curious about how nonprofits have the money for their services without making their own profit. I also worked on completing Case File Checklists because the organization was going to be audited by their parent organization, Church World Services.

The most impactful part of my internship this summer was working with a client. I cannot go into specific details about exactly what I did due to confidentiality, but I was able to help a client begin the process of applying for their Green Card. I would pick them up from their residence, take them to appointments, bring them to the office, and help them with paperwork. Throughout this process, I got to know the individual and learn about their life story. They told

me about all of the hardships they faced in getting to the United States and their adjustment to life here. Working with clients was truly my favorite part of this internship because I got to speak one on one with individuals about their experience and see them gain new skills all the time. I also had the opportunity to translate, fill out paperwork for clients, and so much more.

I had the most amazing experience at RefugeeOne this past summer thanks to the Wellman Hill Grant. I want to thank you immensely for making it possible for me to complete an internship such as this one. I will forever be grateful!