This past summer I spent ten weeks working at the National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF) as a RRASC intern. NNAF is a nonprofit organization that’s mission is to “build power with members to remove financial and logistical barriers to abortion access by centering people who have abortions and organizing at the intersections of racial, economic, and reproductive justice.” NNAF’s work includes directly funding abortion costs for callers, as well as bringing together abortion funds from around the country (and internationally) to support them in their fundraising, event planning, and organizing work. I primarily served the Membership and Organizing Departments.

One of my major projects throughout the summer was working on the new Individual Membership program. I was in charge of managing the database of information on everyone who signed up. Since NNAF is still a pretty small nonprofit organization with limited resources, I was also the single person shipping team for sending out packages that contained a shirt, postcard, and individualized letter from Yamani, our Executive Director, to every new member. We have over 900 members signed up at this point, so this shipping process took up a big chunk of my time and was one of my largest responsibilities at NNAF. But I wasn’t only involved in logistical work for Individual Membership, I also got to be a part of the brainstorming process for the future of this program. I joined the Membership Mobilizing Working Group and helped to plan ways we can engage and organize the individual members to help further NNAF’s cause and get involved in our future campaigns. It was exciting to see how this program could potentially expand our leadership network and build the movement for reproductive justice. At the end of my internship, I actually signed up to be an individual member myself and donate yearly to the
Abortion Rights Fund of Western MA. I’m excited to stay connected to NNAF in this way and continue my support of abortion funding. I can’t wait to participate in the future campaigns and organizing plans NNAF has for its individual membership program!

Since I started my internship in May, my other major role this summer was assisting with all the work surrounding NNAF’s annual Summit in June. I was coming in at a pretty hectic time, so I had to adapt quickly to the fast-paced environment that is pre-Summit for the membership team. This involved a lot of logistical work, like contacting local print shops in Phoenix to figure out the best place to get all our Summit handouts and worksheets printed and delivered to us. I also was in charge of creating the “Meet the Staff” handout for Summit, so I had to contact each staff member and get their bio and job description. This helped me get to know all my coworkers at NNAF and be familiar with everyone’s role at the organization. Additionally, I created a spreadsheet for all the Summit attendees and printed out nametags for everyone. In the last couple weeks leading up to Summit, I was in charge of shipping over all the supplies we might need from our office to the Summit hotel and making sure everything would be all set for us once we got to Phoenix.

At the Summit, I worked behind the scenes with the other NNAF staff members to make sure everything ran smoothly. This involved working at the registration desk, passing out evaluations, setting up rooms for workshops, and taking notes on different sessions for our shared online resource. I also was able to participate in one of the pre-conference trainings at Summit called Organizing Fundamentals 101 that was run by Wellstone. I learned lot of useful tips on “how to make a good ask” of individuals you’re trying to mobilize for a cause, and got to practice some one-on-one networking skills with other members of the training. I also co-facilitated one of the working groups on Membership Day with my supervisor, Nina. We lead
our group through a series of exercises to brainstorm ways to address issues of intersectionality in funds’ work. This was a really incredible moment of growth for me and I learned lot about various facilitation techniques. I was able to make some great connections through the group of fund members I worked with, and we had some very thought-provoking conversations about the future of abortion funding work.

In the weeks following the Summit, I was in charge of digitizing and analyzing all the feedback we got in the form of surveys. I created reports summarizing attendee notes and evaluations for each workshop, plenary, and session, and sent them out to the respective organizers and speakers for each one. I also made a report for results of the overall evaluations each attendee filled out on the Summit as a whole. This feedback is very helpful to NNAF for planning the content and format of next year’s Summit. Additionally, I wrote the Summit wrap-up email that we send every year to our funds that has a lot of the info and resources we shared at Summit, so those who weren’t able to attend can still have an idea of what went on and have access to the group’s notes and presentations. One of these resources was the overview document summarizing Membership Day that I created collaboratively with the other facilitators of Membership Day. Our working groups came up with such great ideas, and we needed a collective place to store them to learn from each other. It’s resources like these that I got to help conceive and design that made me realize how much my insight has been valued at NNAF, and how much I’ve been able to concretely contribute to building NNAF’s future plans.

My supervisors at NNAF were also very supportive in allowing me to adapt my internship responsibilities to fit my passions. They helped me reach out to other staff at NNAF who were working on projects I was interested in and allowed me to dedicate time to pursuing tasks that would further my professional and personal growth. I was able to work with the
communications department on some of the cultural change campaigns they released. As someone studying community health education, a lot of the work that excites me at school and other organizations I’m a part of involves creating graphics and campaigns to promote awareness of different health issues and inequalities. NNAF’s two main cultural campaigns this summer that I was involved in were Abortion Love Stories as well as the July 4th campaign.

The Abortion Love Stories campaign happened during the second week of my internship, so I wasn’t able to be around for most of its preparation, but I jumped right into helping share resources on social media and promote Abortion Love Stories from my personal accounts. Since this was a campaign for mainly new individual members to participate in, it was a big first step in figuring out how we can utilize individual membership to spread NNAF’s values and goals. I was a part of the debrief process after this campaign to figure out what went well and what could’ve gone better. I made some one-on-one calls with funds to interview them on their opinion of this campaign, and how they see individual members fitting into their fund atmosphere and movement-building trajectory. This follow-up process was super informative for me, and I learned a lot about how to utilize constructive criticism and feedback in bettering campaign missions. Seeing as this is exactly the kind of work I’ll probably be doing a lot of in my future career, it was very helpful to have this practice and experience at NNAF.

For our July 4th campaign, I was able to aid the communications department in the lead up and roll out of the campaign via social media. This campaign’s goal was to subvert the usual nationalistic theme of our 4th of July holiday, and instead reclaim what freedom and justice means to us through a reproductive justice lens. I helped find quotes from famous resistance leaders in history on freedom and even participated myself by giving my own definition and making a guest appearance on the NNAF Instagram (check it out)! Lindsay, one of our comms
staff members, had a one-on-one meeting with me where she described the whole process the department goes through usually for each campaign they release, and how they plan for future ones. This behind-the-scenes experience of what it’s like to work for communications in a national organization like NNAF was very useful and fascinating to me. It was great to be have my opinion included and valued in many different aspects of NNAF’s work.

Overall, working at NNAF has been a treasure trove of experiences in growth and development for me in my path to pursuing a career in the reproductive justice world. I have made so many strong connections and friendships this summer because of RRASC, and I’m so thankful for this opportunity to build on my passions in such a concrete way. I’ve discovered what kind of work I look forward to doing in the future, and gained many skills along the way that will help me academically, professionally, and personally. Thank you NNAF, and thank you CLPP!