



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Olivia Pickard

**Law School:** Boston University School of Law

**Organization:** NYLAG Pro Se Clinic

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### Update 1:

I am thrilled to be an Equal Justice America Fellow 2022 – EJA is committed to providing funding for law students and lawyers to work for legal aid programs across the country to serve those most in need of legal services. This summer, EJA is supporting my work at the SDNY Federal Pro Se Clinic. The NYLAG Legal Clinic for Pro Se Litigants in the Southern District of New York is a free legal clinic to assist those who are representing themselves in civil lawsuits. The Clinic assists litigants with federal cases including cases involving civil rights, employment discrimination and other civil claims. Our clients typically do not have access to the financial support necessary for legal representation, though their cases involve serious breaches of civil and human rights. Please feel free to reach out if anyone has questions about my work!

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### Update 2:

This week I am feeling – as I'm sure many of us are – disheartened with our legal system. And in a system designed to punish poor people, marginalized individuals without resources will see the most significant negative impact in their lives. This is true at every level of the courts. In the civil sphere, I am assisting litigants at New York Legal Assistance Group in the Pro Se Federal Clinic (SDNY). Our litigants have been affected by severe police misconduct, employment discrimination based on their race, abuse by correctional officers and refusal to have their disabilities accommodated. Many of our litigants have trauma from the initial inciting event and then are further traumatized by the treatment from our legal system. Many of the litigants I work with, though they've been advocating for their own justice for years, have said that speaking to someone in the clinic is the first time anyone has listened to their story in full.

I am grateful that Equal Justice America is supporting my work at NYLAG. Though tangible change takes time, I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak to these litigants and be allowed the time to listen intently to their stories.



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## **Update 4:**

Hi everyone! I am leaving NYLAG this week to return to Boston, but I have had an incredible time at this organization. This is my last opportunity for fundraising for EJA, who has made all this possible. Please consider donating.

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## **Update 5:**

My time at the NYLAG Pro Se Clinic has come to an end and I've learned so much about the inherent inequality of our legal system. I'm amazed by the work of the staff attorneys at NYLAG and would love it if they could have more resources to effectively do their work. EJA supports exactly the type of help that the clinic needs. Please consider donating if you can.