



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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**Organization:** MALDEF

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### Update 1:

Hey Everyone,

Just a quick update: I am interning at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) this summer. MALDEF is the leading Latinx civil rights organization in the United States. MALDEF specializes in public policy advocacy and litigation in voting, employee, immigrant, and educational rights. I am excited to be a small part of their efforts to ensure civil rights for the Latinx community. I am only two weeks into this experience, but I have already done some exciting voting and employment rights work. For example, I am currently analyzing a recent Supreme Court ruling and its impact on our ongoing litigation.

One of the reasons I can do this work is because of funding from Equal Justice America. Equal Justice America funds law students pursuing careers in public interest organizations such as MALDEF. The need for legal services for at-risk communities is high, and the supply of legal is not. According to the ABA, 80% of the civil legal needs of people experiencing poverty are not met. Equal Justice America exists to fill this gap.

I am looking forward to the rest of the summer!

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### Update 2:

Hey All,

It's been a few weeks since my last post and I have another [EJA Fellow update!](#) I have been working at Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund for the last five weeks and have learned so much. Since my last post, I have worked on several assignments including my first court filing. I have helped MALDEF attorneys with litigation involving voting and employee rights. I have also had the opportunity to work on a couple of immigration-related issues which excites me given my interest in that legal field. MALDEF has also provided me



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the opportunity to meet several attorneys outside of MALDEF who have provided me with lots of helpful information about the legal profession.

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## **Update 3:**

Hey All,

It's been a few weeks since my last post, and I have another [EJA Fellow update](#)! I am still at MALDEF working on some important litigation and public policy advocacy. About a week and a half ago I was assigned to a new case. I, unfortunately, cannot describe specifics about it. But when I was assigned to this case, I was assigned the task of working with some data, analyzing it, and making visuals. This assignment really gave me flashbacks to working at the OIG and allowed me to use skills I developed while there. It's always interesting to use old skills in new ways. I look forward to learning new skills at MALDEF so that someday I can think back to MALDEF while employing them in a different context.

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## **Update 4:**

Hey All,

It's time for another #ejafellowupdate! The last few weeks at MALDEF I have spent attempting to learn from the attorneys. One of the attorneys, who litigates employment cases for MALDEF, has a similar background to mine. After finishing her undergraduate degree, she spent years working before going to law school. Asking her questions about how she ended up at MALDEF has been incredibly useful to me and my future. For example, after she finished law school, she went through the competitive process of securing a two-year fellowship within MALDEF. Through this process, she developed a case she is now litigating. At the center of this case is an employer who discriminated against a group of clients based on their sex and alienage. Seeing that this attorney was able to turn her post-law school goals of protecting the rights of immigrant women into reality is truly inspiring. It makes me hopeful that I will be able to complete my own personal goals too.

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## **Update 5:**

Hey Everyone,

This is my final [EJA Fellow update](#) for Equal Justice America. My time at MALDEF has ended, and I start a new semester next week. Looking back over the course of the summer, I am incredibly proud of the work we accomplished and very grateful for the knowledge I have gained at MALDEF. Specifically, I had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects and cases that not only taught me about critical issues Latinx communities face but also the importance of impact litigation.

MALDEF is the country's leading Latino legal civil rights organization, with offices scattered throughout the country. In my role as a summer intern, I had the privilege of assisting attorneys in their litigation and advocacy. I also had the pleasure of meeting and working with interns from other law schools from around the country. Together we worked on a broad array of cases and projects, including some arising out of employer discrimination and voter discrimination. Over the course of the summer, I had the opportunity to write court



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filings. I also researched and drafted memoranda on a broad array of issues. MALDEF also brought in speakers for the interns to hear about other legal professionals' work and their careers. In all, it was such a worthwhile experience because I learned so much from MALDEF's team, the other interns, and the guest speakers. I know as I proceed with my legal education and career, I will always have this experience in mind. My time at MALDEF has affirmed my decision to pursue a legal career.

I am so grateful for Equal Justice America's funding which allowed me to work at MALDEF this summer. Equal Justice America funds law students pursuing careers in public interest organizations such as MALDEF. The need for legal services for at-risk communities is high, and the supply of legal is not. According to the ABA, 80% of the civil legal needs of people experiencing poverty are not met. Equal Justice America exists to fill this gap.

Thanks!