



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Organization: Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, San Antonio

Update 1: I'm happy to report I've wrapped up my second year of law school! Now that I've had a chance to reflect on the year, I'd like to share some highlights. This year I completed two semesters of clinical work with St. Mary's Immigration and Human Rights Clinic, where I'll be returning as a TA next fall. I also had the opportunity to compete alongside some outstanding advocates (and all-around delightful human beings) on St. Mary's National Moot Court Team as a brief writer and oralist.

I'm looking forward to what's to come! Next year, I'll be a Staff Writer for The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Race and Social Justice. I'll also be serving as a Co-Director of the Reentry & Reintegration Clinic. But in the meantime, I'll be clerking with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in San Antonio, Texas, this summer. I was fortunate to be awarded a couple of fellowship opportunities through Equal Justice America and St. Mary's Public Interest Fellowship to make this opportunity possible.

In the day-to-day hustle of law school, I've found that it is exceptionally easy to lose sight of your "why." I'm so grateful for the support of my family, friends, and colleagues who have cheered me on to reach this point.

Update 2: I'm spending this summer with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund in San Antonio, Texas. This is my first experience with civil rights litigation, and I've learned so much in my first two weeks. I'm very grateful for this opportunity to learn about the scope and impact of voting law alongside our cohort of summer law clerks. I'm proud to contribute to this team, especially because I've been able to support through research on my home region (hey, Rio Grande Valley!).

Update 3: It's been a busy couple of weeks with MALDEF! We've been hard at work supporting the team's Texas redistricting challenge and gearing up to defend DACA before the Fifth Circuit next week. (!) It's been inspiring to learn from and work alongside MALDEF's team of all-star attorneys. They've been so generous



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about sharing their time and advice with our law clerk class. They each have unique backgrounds that fuels their “why” in this civil rights space. This practice area is challenging, but this team understands how vital this work is to our clients and the Latino community as a whole.

Update 4: Last week, our clerk cohort traveled to New Orleans to watch MALDEF's VP of Litigation, Nina Perales, defend DACA before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. It was an incredible experience from start to finish. We had the opportunity to watch preparations leading up to the arguments and then arrived at the courthouse before dawn to watch delivery of the arguments in federal court.

DACA proponents held a morning vigil prior to the arguments. Listening to DACA recipients’ testimonies was a powerful reminder of the people and families impacted by this policy. The human element of this work is so moving. I’m very proud to contribute to the team doing this work.

Update 5: My time as a summer law clerk with MALDEF is drawing to a close. It’s been a busy summer and I’ve learned so much! This summer was packed with legal research and drafting for ongoing litigation involving Texas SB 1 (87th legislature, 2nd session) and the 2021 Texas redistricting plan (87th legislature, 3rd session). I’ve also been able to support our litigation team with careful review of documents produced and received through discovery. Working with MALDEF has been such an energizing experience. I am so happy to have contributed to MALDEF’s advocacy for Latinos impacted by inequitable policies.

The end of this clerkship is bittersweet. I’ve been able to learn from a remarkable group of attorneys who have been so generous with their time and mentorship. I’ve also had the opportunity to work alongside an incredible cohort of law clerks that I’ll miss dearly. I am so proud of everything we’ve been able to accomplish together this summer.

I’m very grateful to Equal Justice America for the fellowship funds that made pursuing this opportunity possible.