



## Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Rebecca Davis

**Law School:** Fordham University School of Law

**Organization:** Immigrant Rights Clinic

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### Week of June 15th

I'm so grateful to Equal Justice America and Lincoln Square Legal Services Inc. for the opportunity to continue pursuing my passion for protecting immigrant rights as an EJA Fellow.

This summer, I am helping clients apply for U nonimmigrant status, often known as U visas. People qualify for U visas if they have survived a crime, suffered mental or physical abuse, and helped the government to investigate or prosecute that crime. It can take years to get a response after applying. The response will likely be deferred action because only 10,000 U visas are available each fiscal year. My clients' fortitude and strength in the face of the trauma they have endured—which they have to relive when cooperating in the investigation and when applying for immigration benefits—is a humbling reminder of why we must zealously advocate for a more empathetic immigration system.

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### Week of July 6th

I'm so grateful to Equal Justice America and Lincoln Square Legal Services Inc. for the opportunity to continue pursuing my passion for protecting immigrant rights as an EJA Fellow.

Since my last update, one of my clients has received deferred action on her U visa application! That means that the government has conducted a preliminary review and believe she meets the requirements, but do not have a U visa available in this fiscal year. In the meantime, my client is able to apply for employment authorization, so for the last couple weeks we have been compiling documents to show she has an economic necessity to work. It is a very exciting time for my client, as being able to work legally will open so many opportunities for her.



## **Week of July 27th**

This is my third EJA Fellow update of the summer, and my last week as a Research Assistant for the Immigrant Rights Clinic at Fordham. This experience wouldn't have been possible without Equal Justice America.

This past week, I have been putting together a memo about trauma-informed advocacy for the next student team who will be starting later this month. The immigration process can be incredibly dehumanizing for clients because they have to relive some of their worst memories in order to "earn" safety in the United States. One of the most important parts of representing people is empathy and keeping in mind how trauma affects people's ability to remember and recount certain memories. This has by far been the most crucial lesson I've learned in my internship experience, and I plan to carry that with me into my immigration career.

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## **Week of August 10th**

Wow, this summer has flown by! I am so grateful to Fordham University and Equal Justice America for my wonderful experience as a legal intern at the Immigrant Rights Clinic. I gained integral skills in immigration advocacy -- like interviewing clients, preparing affidavits, researching supporting evidence -- that provide me with a strong foundation in pursuing a career as an immigration advocate. This fall, I will use those skills at my new internship, where I will be working on defensive asylum claims. In spring of 2021, I will return to the Immigrant Rights Clinic full time as a Pro Bono Scholar, so I can continue building my experiential skills.

Part of what has made this summer possible is the fellowship I received from Equal Justice America. This funding allowed me to dedicate my summer to providing free legal services to immigrant mothers. It is Equal Justice America's mission to uphold the promise of Justice for All, and all the fellows they funded have used their summer to provide legal services to underserved communities.