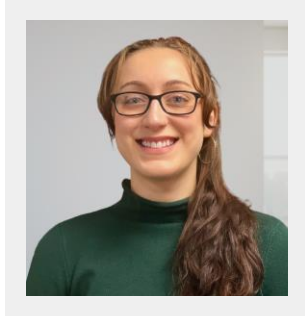




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



Name: Tayler Gospodarek

Law School: Rutgers Law School

Organization: ACLU of New Jersey

Update 1:

Closing out my third week at the ACLU of New Jersey! Working on decarceration, protecting LGBTQ+ youth, and other critical efforts to promote a fair and equitable New Jersey. I am thankful to have learned so much already in this short time and look forward to what the rest of the summer will bring.

Update 2:

I attended the ACLU of New Jersey's "Expanding Freedom and Centering Humanity: A Vision of Decarceration in New Jersey" event last night, where there was a powerful discussion on the crisis of mass incarceration and why decarceration is fundamental to achieving social and racial justice. Read more about how the ACLU of New Jersey has helped in reducing New Jersey's prison population by more than 50 percent since 2011 in this groundbreaking report: aclu-nj.org/decarceration

Update 3:

Had the pleasure of attending a screening of 'Reimagining Safety' last week, a film where 10 experts discuss how policing and incarceration create more harm than good, why the system persists, and what changes can be made to make everyone safe. Thanks to the ACLU of New Jersey for connecting me with these opportunities!

Update 4:

Nearing the end of my summer with the ACLU of New Jersey is certainly bittersweet. I will miss working with the dedicated, successful team here, but am incredibly thankful for the invaluable skills I've gained along the way. Thank you to all who have kept up with the journey!

Update 5:

I am grateful to have spent my summer at the ACLU of New Jersey, learning about critical state issues impacting the rights of New Jerseyans. My work surrounded the specific topics of protecting LGBTQ youth,



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

holding correctional facilities accountable for information transparency regarding incidents in their prisons, decarceration, immigration, and research on the relationship between insurance companies and financing police department misconduct settlements. Through this work, I've learned the more intricate details of issues I previously only had a surface level understanding of, as well as entirely new topics posing challenges for our communities here in New Jersey. I've also gained valuable insight regarding how such issues are addressed – through policy, legislation, active litigation, and other advocacy means, such as amicus briefs in support of certain parties. This has all taught me that the road to social justice is not always clearcut, but rather requires a hybrid approach blending several of these tools together to achieve the common goal.

This experience has given me several takeaways for my future work. While it has certainly reinforced my dedication to social justice and civil rights, it has also given me a better idea regarding what type of workplace I see myself in as well as what type of legal tool I find myself most gravitating toward. Regarding the workplace, the ACLU of New Jersey's collaborative, supporting environment mirrors the type of office culture I view as not only the most efficient and successful, but also the best match for the type of atmosphere that works best for myself. For the legal tool, policy work has caught my attention the most this summer. The rigorous research combined with advocacy in a more "behind the scenes" approach, targeting the root of inequality by holding our policymakers and legislatures accountable is certainly an area of law I see myself thriving in.