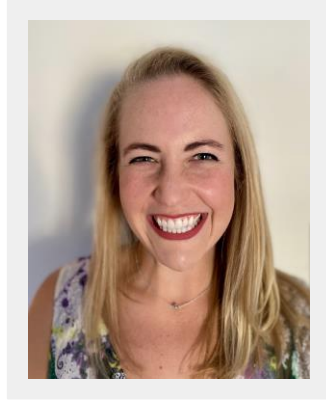




# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Hayden Henderson

**Law School:** Stanford Law School

**Organization:** Brennan Center, Justice Program

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**Update 1:** I started my job at the Brennan Center three hours ago and I am already so excited about my summer experience here! I will be doing work with bail reform and possibly work involving algorithmic bias in the criminal justice system. The team I am working with is enormously passionate and they are riding a high from a huge victory in the state legislature on Friday night. Feeling the buzzing energy and hearing all of the congratulations is a wonderful reminder that change CAN happen with patience, commitment, and hard work. I am honored to be included as part of their team this summer!

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**Update 2:** I've spent the majority of my time at the Brennan Center doing research into what different states specify their justification or purpose is when considering releasing someone on bail or sentencing them to pretrial detention. In our next steps, we plan to look at whether there is any association with the crime rates across different states. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Brennan Center so far - there are so many brilliant ideas being exchanged and so many innovative projects taking off, so it's an exciting place to be inspired in!

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**Update 3:** I've had an incredible time at the Brennan Center thus far. Not only have I been writing up the findings from my bail research for a report, but I've also been looped into to several shorter research projects. For example, I spent time researching defendants' abilities to appeal a conviction (or guilty plea) based on claims of actual innocence. I proofread a new book coming out from the Brennan Center about punitive excess in the criminal legal system. I researched federal grant solicitations for the lead of the justice program. Lastly, I have been doing a longer-term research project into the intersection of homelessness and criminal legal involvement in response to community members calling for help in the area. I feel like I've learned a tremendous amount but am also doing work that is useful to my team and to the community generally.

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**Update 4:** I have spent the majority of the past few weeks working on a memo to assist in a project being funded by the MacArthur Foundation. The project generally is a large-scale qualitative study to understand the impact of minor offense convictions from the perspectives of many different stakeholders, including government and law officials as well as community members. Inspired by the feedback from impacted communities that homelessness and eviction contribute to and exacerbates harms caused by minor offense convictions, I've been drafting a memo for our report researching the intersection of the criminal legal system and homelessness, and how this is exacerbated by eviction risk and the lack of available supportive housing alternatives. I learned a tremendous amount about the topic and ultimately drafted a 15-page memo to contribute to the ultimate report.

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**Update 5:** Wow – it's been such an amazing summer and I'm disappointed that my time at the Brennan Center is already coming to an end! I've learned so many things this summer — both professionally as well as personally about the types of things I will look for in my future employment — and I'm incredibly grateful for the support I received from both the Brennan Center as well as EJA for helping to make my summer such a unique and impactful experience. I learned a tremendous amount about bail reform, which is what I spent the majority of my time working on this summer. Not only did I learn about the historical justifications for monetary bail — and how those shifted away from returning to court and towards concerns for public safety during the “crime wave” in the 1980's — but by examining reforms across the 50 states, I also learned about the nuances of proposed and implemented reforms and the multitudes of ways they can be successfully and unsuccessfully implemented. Additionally, I worked on a memo examining how the media and political narrative of bail reform can impact how the public perceives the reforms, and potentially how successful or unsuccessful they turn out to be as a result of this. I also spent a significant amount of time doing research on how convictions for minor offenses (e.g., nonviolent misdemeanors) cause collateral consequences that detrimentally impact peoples' lives for years if not forever. The two research topics I examined — the intersection of housing/homelessness and criminal justice and immigration consequences for minor offenses — derived from conversations with communities impacted by over-policing. Thus, doing research into topics requested by the very individuals who are impacted by the system felt not only valuable but incredibly rewarding, like I was contributing to something I knew was actually of importance to the people I want to help. Lastly, I realized on a more personal level how much more enjoyable work is when you are surrounded by supportive, brilliant, passionate, and collaborative individuals, and that is the exact experience I had at the Brennan Center. I felt like I was immediately part of a team, and I was given real responsibilities to contribute to a greater mission for pursuing justice for others. I'm eternally grateful for the supervision and mentorship that I received at the Brennan Center, and I have the utmost respect for both their brilliance and their compassion. It would be an absolute honor to be a more full-time part of their team.