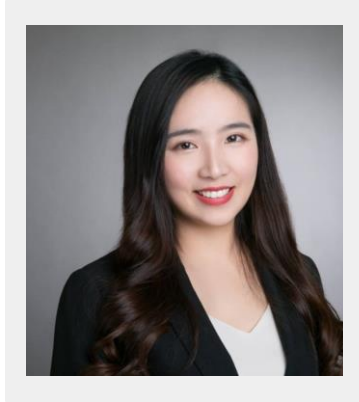




# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Lin Mao

**Law School:** University of Wisconsin Law School

**Organization:** Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

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**Update 1:** I am grateful to the Equal Justice America Fellowship and the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) Equity and Inclusion Fellowship for granting me the opportunity to travel to LA and work at LAFLA this summer. The support of these two scholarships has been invaluable.

During my time here, I have had the privilege of assisting clients who are predominantly survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other related crimes in various areas of law, including family and immigration law. It has been a rewarding experience, and I am eager to share stories about what I have learned and how I have grown while working at LAFLA.

Throughout the summer, I plan to post regular updates about my journey. I invite you to follow along and witness the impact we can make in the lives of those who need legal aid the most. Your support and engagement mean a lot to me.

Thank you for joining me on this journey.

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**Update 2:** 🎉 Excited to share my experience as a Law Clerk at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles! 🤝

During my time at the foundation, I've had the privilege of working on a diverse range of legal matters that have deepened my understanding of the law and reinforced my commitment to serving our clients' needs. Here are some highlights from my journey:

- Immigration Law: I have focused on applications such as VAWA, T Visa, and U Visa. It has been immensely rewarding to assist victims of trafficking and some other crimes seeking protection.



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- **Family Law and Domestic Violence:** I have worked on cases involving the application of Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and dissolution proceedings, ensuring the safety and well-being of those in vulnerable situations.

- **Government Benefits Advocacy:** I've focused on appealing decisions made by agencies regarding essential benefits such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and EDD. Securing these benefits is crucial for our clients' survival, often making a life-changing impact.

- **Tenant Rights Advocacy:** Defending tenants' rights and preventing unjust evictions has been another vital aspect of my work. I strive to ensure that our clients are not unfairly evicted without just cause or due process, offering them stability and a voice in the face of challenging circumstances.

- **Employee Rights:** Protecting the rights of employees has been a fulfilling part of my legal practice. I have fought for fair compensation, ensuring that individuals receive their entitled overtime payments and enjoy legally mandated breaks.

While it can sometimes be overwhelming to witness their struggles, this experience has strengthened my client-oriented methodologies. By focusing on their real needs and setting clear goals, I have grown both personally and professionally. Each day working at LAFLA brings new opportunities to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients, and I look forward to continuing this important work.

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## **Update 3:** ◇ Improving Language Access at EDD: Advocating for Public Interest

In my work on appealing the Employment Development Department (EDD)'s decisions, which often reduce or deny benefits and impose penalties on limited English-speaking clients, I've come to recognize the crucial need for language services provided by California's governmental entities.

EDD handles job development and unemployment benefits, including UIB and PUA. However, API face difficulties accessing EDD services due to overwhelmed phone lines without language support.

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) has proudly played a crucial role in improving language access at EDD, by filing the initial complaint that triggered this mediation. Through a recent settlement, EDD will provide real-time translation services, expand phone lines to include the top seven non-English languages, and translate vital unemployment insurance documents into 15 languages by 2024.

These developments reinforce my understanding of the transformative power of laws and legal aid in advocating for public interest. Let's continue to champion language access rights and work towards a more inclusive future.



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**Update 4:** 🌟 Grateful for an Empowering Summer at LAFLA! 🤝

As my time as a law clerk at Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) comes to an end, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for this enriching experience.

Interacting with clients daily has boosted my confidence and improved my conversation skills. It's been truly transformative.

Witnessing the impact of legal aid on vulnerable individuals' lives has been humbling and inspiring. Every effort counts!

Thank you, LAFLA, for the invaluable lessons and support. Excited for the future ahead! 🙏

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**Update 5:** 🌟 Grateful for My Non-Profit Law Firm Journey in Los Angeles 🌟

Over the past summer, I've had the incredible opportunity to work with a non-profit law firm here in Los Angeles, which has given me a firsthand look at the pressing social problems and injustices that our legal community faces on a daily basis. I'm excited to continue learning, growing, and working towards a future where the legal community stands as a beacon of hope for those in need.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me on this journey!