



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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**Update 1:** It's time for my first EJA Fellow Update as a Summer Law Clerk for Innovation Law Lab. I have spent the first two weeks of the internship in trainings learning about Law Lab's groundbreaking and creative programs, which are designed to scale up representation to provide #immigrant legal services on a #universalrepresentation basis to income-eligible communities in Oregon. Additionally, I drafted and submitted my first advocacy memorandum to the #DHS, which urges the agency to adopt a rule extending the automatic #workpermit renewal period to 540 days, as well as include more immigrants within the rule's protections. To prepare the memorandum, I conducted extensive research on the economic and social contributions of immigrant workers in Oregon and highlighted @LawLab's important work as a legal services provider with the Equity Corps of Oregon. Many people who have not had to navigate the immigration legal system don't realize that immigrants must go through a tedious and constantly recurring process to renew their authorization to work, a process which due to current #processingbacklogs poses significant burdens on immigrants and their families, the lawyers who represent them, employers of immigrants, and even the government officials tasked with adjudicating the renewal applications. My advocacy memorandum highlights how a lengthened extension period is truly beneficial for all parties involved. I am excited to be using my legal skills and training to advocate for transformative and systemic change to the immigration legal system.

**Update 2:** In this chapter of my immigrant rights internship at Innovation Law Lab, I have commenced my first ever case helping a client apply for #TemporaryProtectedStatus. Throughout this process I have tried to incorporate best practices from Law Lab's client communications trainings to ensure that I am breaking down the process in a helpful way, respecting and centering the client, and navigating Law Lab's efficient massive collaborative representation system effectively and efficiently. I have also continued to support Law Lab's Anti-Carceral Legal Organizing Team, which has been by far one of the most rewarding experiences of the internship. I am currently helping Law Lab colleagues develop a report presenting findings from listening surveys organizers conducted in a New Mexico County. The goal of this report is to identify the real needs and priorities of rural communities in the area and amplify community visions for



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alternatives to detention, which in proffered survey responses have centered on healthcare, food security, youth empowerment, and other people-centered economic growth. I would not be able to do this internship without EJA's support and I encourage anyone with the means to make a donation today to support the organization's fellows of this summer and years to come!

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**Update 3:** I have continued my work on a TPS case, which is almost ready for filing. Gathering evidence for the case has been a challenge but I am learning how to find creative ways to build a record as well as how to navigate Law Lab's massive collaborative representation model. I am also continuing to support Law Lab's Anticarceral Legal Organizing (AcLO) efforts in Torrance County, New Mexico by performing research, writing, and document review. On the horizon, I am headed to Bend, Oregon next weekend to participate in a clinic for asylum seekers. Having only lived and worked in the Northeast U.S. before, I am delighted to be able to help people in rural Oregon access immigration assistance and to support communities organizing for immigrant rights in rural U.S. Thank you so much to Equal Justice America for allowing me to pursue this impactful and fulfilling work.

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**Update 4:** My most recent efforts at #InnovationLawLab have focused on researching available relief from deportation for a client in removal proceedings who has come into contact with the criminal legal system. Regardless of factors like decades lived in the United States, family ties, work, and other deep roots in the country, non-citizens who come into contact with the police often end up in deportation proceedings and face the catastrophic prospect of separation from their loved ones and their life in the United States. Deportation is not afforded the constitutional scrutiny to which other punishments meted out by the criminal legal system are subject and people placed in removal proceedings do not have a constitutionally guaranteed right to an attorney. Although in many cases a conviction forecloses many avenues for deportation relief, a good attorney can greatly improve a client's odds of winning their case. This reality demonstrates the essential importance of immigration legal services, and it is what motivates me to work in this field.

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**Update 5:** It's time for my last EJA Fellow Update! In my final weeks at Innovation Law Lab, I helped draft a report on community visions for a thriving Torrance County, in which I focused on expanding healthcare access, investing in care for people with substance use disorders, and making healthcare for aging folks more accessible. This report is based on responses from a survey called the Torrance County Listening Project conducted by Law Lab's Anticarceral Legal Organizing (AcLO) team and partners and is a creative attempt to interrogate what a more thriving, abundant, and livable Torrance County would look like. I have appreciated the challenge of trying to identify, quantify and critically assess the stakes of organizing for abolition in a particular rural community through this report and other projects. I have also supported Law Lab's ongoing class action and FOIA litigation on behalf of Haitian migrants who experienced abuse at the U.S.-Mexico border in Del Rio, Texas in 2021, by conducting document review and attending meetings with the plaintiffs. Getting to support this litigation, interact with the plaintiffs, and work with amazing partners like the Haitian Bridge Alliance has also been a highlight of the internship. Thank you so much to Equal Justice America for helping me pursue my dream internship at Innovation Law Lab. Please consider supporting future immigrant rights' advocates' by donating to EJA.