



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



<b>NAME</b>	Hani Fish-Bieler (she/her)
<b>LAW SCHOOL</b>	Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	The Bronx Defenders

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#### Update 1:

I'm so excited to share that I have completed my 2L year at Cardozo School of Law, and begun working as a legal intern in the Civil Action Practice at the The Bronx Defenders, and an Equal Justice America Fellow. I'm already learning so much about civil practice in the context of holistic defense, and I look forward to seeing what else the summer has in store!

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#### Update 2:

I'm happy to report that I've had a really great start to my summer at The Bronx Defenders. This past month I've been researching, writing, and working with clients to address the housing instability far too many Bronx residents face on a daily basis. In work like this, the smallest wins can feel really, really big.

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#### Update 3:

It's been another great couple of weeks working in the Civil Action Practice at The Bronx Defenders. I'm especially grateful for the invaluable mentorship and trial skills training I'm getting this summer.

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#### Update 4:

I'm so grateful for the experience I've had this summer in the Civil Action Practice at The Bronx Defenders. I feel lucky to have spent the summer working and learning from advocates who are committed to supporting clients holistically, and I look forward taking the lessons I've learned about what client-centered representation looks like in practice into my final year of law school and beyond.



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I would be remiss if I didn't give a shoutout to the supervisors who made this summer what it was for me, and to the clients who made me excited to get up and go to work every day!

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## **Update 5:**

I was so grateful to have EJA's support this summer in my internship at the Bronx Defenders. I learned a tremendous amount over the course of the summer. I was able to get a wide range of legal experiences, including working on housing and employment cases. I also took part in an intensive trial advocacy program where I received multidisciplinary training in a range of critical litigation skills.

Throughout law school, and this summer in particular, I have come to understand that I am really excited by the work of client-centered direct representation. Working within the legal system can be incredibly demoralizing. The clients I worked with over the course of the summer faced formidable challenges as a result of their legal system involvement. For me, building relationships with these clients, and getting to know them far beyond the difficult facts of a given case, is not only exciting because of their rich stories. Developing deep relationships with clients helps me orient my legal goals towards their personal goals, thereby allowing me to be the best advocate that I can.

I am especially glad to have spent my summer engaged in civil work in an interdisciplinary context; a client is always so much more than the flattening picture painted by a single legal case, and in a holistic defense office I was able not only to acknowledge that, but to address it by working collaboratively with other staff members with totally different expertise than my supervisors. Now, as I begin my first semester of my final year of law school, I have begun working as a student attorney in my school's Criminal Defense Clinic. In order to be able to best serve a client, it is crucial for criminal defense attorneys to be on the lookout for all the potential legal consequences a criminal case can bring, and I am really grateful to be doing this work with the background I now have in civil legal services.

After graduation, I look forward to taking the lessons I have learned this summer about what it means to be a client-centered legal advocate with me into my legal career.