



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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**Update 1:** I'm now a week into my internship at the Civil Rights and Police Accountability Project at the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. My co-intern and I are working on a number of projects that touch on various issues affecting over-policed communities all throughout Chicago, ranging from police abuse to the lack of access to public defenders. This past week, I had the opportunity to attend my first-ever public hearing, which was fascinating (and at times frustrating!). It was exciting to see it all play out in real-time and see the Chicago residents using their voices to push for change. My co-intern and I also had the chance to collaborate on an internal memo and have been preparing to interview a potential client. I'm astonished at how much I've been able to accomplish and how much I've learned in such a short time, and I look forward to seeing what the rest of this summer has in store.

**Update 2:** It's been three weeks since I've begun my internship at the Civil Rights and Police Accountability Project at the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. This past week I had the opportunity to work on a number of exciting and interesting projects. Most notably, I was able to join in on CPD station visits all throughout Chicago and work on a budding research project pertaining to public defenders. The station visits were incredibly illuminating as they highlighted many of the flaws present in Chicago police districts such as lack of access to a telephone and overall uncleanliness. My co-intern and I have also taken responsibility of discovery for a pending trial. This internship has taught me a lot in such a short time and I'm grateful for the opportunity to build my skill set. I know the skills I've learned thus far will be valuable for my career long term.

**Update 3:** I am more than halfway done with my internship at the Civil Rights and Police Accountability Project at the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. These past few weeks were very busy, full of memos, meetings, and research. Most notably, I completed a memo discussing CPD's compliance with the Federal Consent Decree, analyzed CPD use of force data, and attended a community meeting with the CPD Superintendent. I also got to spend this past week sitting in on community coalition meetings which highlighted the different roles lawyers and



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community activists can play in community-based work. These experiences further emphasized the importance of having both roles present in those spaces and strengthened my appreciation for grassroots organizing.

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**Update 4:** I've completed my last week at the Civil Rights and Police Accountability Clinic and cannot believe how quickly these eight weeks have passed. At the clinic, I was lucky enough to work on various projects. My co-intern and I conducted legal research, wrote multiple memos, presented in front of the Chicago Public Defender's office, and participated in many coalition meetings. My time at the clinic has not only afforded me practical lawyering skills but has instilled a great deal of confidence in me, especially when it comes to work product and taking the lead on specific projects. The collaborative aspect of the clinic has also been immensely beneficial. I can say with conviction that working alongside my clinic supervisor and co-intern has been one of the best collaborative experiences and has taught me so much. I'm looking forward to returning to the clinic during my 2L year, continuing working on some ongoing projects, and diving deeper into the world of police accountability.

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**Update 5:**

I was privileged enough to spend my 1L summer interning at the Civil Rights and Police Accountability Project at the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. Reflecting on my work this summer, I'm very proud of what I accomplished. I reviewed dozens of documents and examined evidence for a case preparing for trial. I wrote numerous internal memos and experienced a hearing for the first time. I assessed the Chicago Police Department's compliance with a federal consent decree, collaborated on a research project on public defender independence, and had the opportunity to present this work to the Public Defender's Office. This summer afforded me the chance to engage in legal work for the first time and gain legal knowledge I could not have learned by sitting in a lecture hall.

Though I came into this summer with an understanding of the injustices plaguing the criminal justice system, my time at the clinic was unlike anything I could have predicted. From meeting survivors of police violence and hearing their stories to visiting Chicago Police Department stations and seeing first-hand the conditions that some of the most vulnerable members of our community are forced to endure, this experience was incredibly sobering. I was reminded of the value of legal aid and how imperative it is to use my privilege as a law student to advance the cause of police accountability. While these moments brought feelings of frustration, they also brought feelings of hope as I met local activists and saw the changes they are working tirelessly to make in Chicago.

I'm very grateful to Professor Futterman for entrusting me to work on a variety of projects and allowing me to engage in work I had never done before. Professor Futterman fostered a work environment of collaboration and education that solidified confidence in my abilities and taught me practical skills I know I will use throughout my career. Going into my 2L year, I look forward to returning to the clinic and not only experiencing what it's like to work on a case preparing for trial but also dedicating time to engaging with Chicago's South Side community and helping survivors of police violence.