



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

SUMMER 2024

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

NAME	Jordan Cozby
LAW SCHOOL	Yale Law School
ORGANIZATION	NAACP Legal Defense Fund

Update 1:

This summer I am interning with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Atlanta, Georgia. The work is off to an exciting start. I have helped draft pretrial motions in a Congressional redistricting case on remand from the U.S. Supreme Court. I am helping prepare for a hearing on a motion to quash. I will be attending the hearing and look forward to the opportunity to see the justice system in action. I have been especially energized by LDF's commitment to working in the South, a region too often overlooked by policymakers and major organizations. LDF is making important strides for justice and equity in some of the most difficult political contexts.

I have been impressed by LDF's broad reach and intersecting priorities. For example, I attended the Law and Society Association's conference last weekend and presenting on some of my academic research. Researchers from LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute were also at the conference and organized an author talk with Leah Rothstein. The talk was fascinating and provided an opportunity to see how LDF is making a difference not only in the courtroom, but also by enriching intellectual and scholarly analysis of systemic racism in the United States.

Update 2:

Thanks to EJA's support, I have been able to continue my work with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Atlanta. My summer internship has provided valuable, hands-on legal experience. Last week, I was able to attend and help our attorneys prepare for a motion to quash hearing in federal court. The hearing was for a redistricting case on remand from the U.S. Supreme Court. These voting rights cases are especially exciting to work on because they frequently do go all the way to trial. Witnessing the oral arguments and participating in the preparation for the hearing affirmed my interest in public interest litigation. LDF's attorneys are tremendously talented and have been great mentors as I learn more about this field. I am looking forward to



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

seeing how the case moves forward and to supporting the team with additional projects over the rest of the summer.

Update 3:

I have continued to enjoy my work with LDF. In addition to my work on the Milligan case, I have been researching case law in two federal circuits and developing novel legal theories for an LDF investigation that may lead to future litigation. LDF's breadth of capacity, from its litigation team to its organizing department, its in-house think tank and archives (the Thurgood Marshall Institute) to its voter protection team, enables the organization to respond rapidly and in a multifaceted way to new challenges. I have also been grateful for LDF's commitment to standing up to injustice wherever it presents itself. LDF has consistently stood up for the values I care about across a wide spectrum of issues. In past work, I have often felt like I have had to compromise some part of my values to align with a narrow, but positive, vision embodied by my employer. At LDF, I feel fully aligned with the values of the organization. As someone who was born and raised in Alabama, LDF's commitment to advancing racial justice in the South has especially resonated with me. Too many organizations and funders overlook the South, but LDF is consistently on the front lines of important legal issues in the region.

Update 4:

My time with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund continues to be informative and impactful. I have been working on legal research project to reduce barriers to housing for people with a criminal record. The project has provided a tremendous learning opportunity about how local, state, and federal laws and regulations interact with each other. My research has also revealed ways the law recognizes intersecting protected characteristics under the Fair Housing Act in ways that may be advantageous to prospective clients.

I continue to be impressed by both the breadth and depth of LDF's work. Today interns had the opportunity to hear from LDF attorneys working on voter protection and electoral engagement work. I admired the team's cross-cutting strategies to protect voting rights through litigation and other avenues for change.

I remain tremendously grateful for the opportunity to work at LDF this summer and for EJA's support making my work possible.

Update 5:

I had a wonderful experience this summer as a litigation intern with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Atlanta. I worked on *Milligan*, the Alabama redistricting case on remand from the United States Supreme Court. The case team provided meaningful research and writing assignments. I was also able to attend and help with preparation for the three-judge panel hearing. The experience provided a much better understanding of the discovery process and what constitutes



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

pretrial motions practice. As someone pursuing future opportunities to litigate in the public interest, learning from LDF's team of talented attorneys was an invaluable experience. Many of them have worked at other nonprofits, union-side labor law firms, in government, or other roles of interest to me. Talking with them about their careers and learning what made LDF unique has shaped my planning for the future.

My own values and priorities aligned well with LDF's mission. Too often, nonprofits and advocates ignore problems in the South, but LDF centers southern states in its work. As an Alabama native, I resonated with the work and knew how much of an impact LDF is having in my community. For example, the *Milligan* case has helped secure a second majority-minority Congressional district in Alabama. Last week, I had the opportunity to meet Shomari Figures, who is likely soon-to-be elected Representative from the new district. Learning about his story and the work he will do in Washington D.C. affirmed the importance of LDF's work to me.

I also worked on discrimination and housing legal research. I researched novel legal questions in response to recent Supreme Court rulings and agency rulemaking. This work contrasted with the pretrial motions practice work of *Milligan* and helped me better understand the kind of legal work I would like to do in the future. The work also showed me how court decisions, regulatory changes, and litigation together create political and social change.

My placement in Atlanta also contributed positively to my summer experience. I was able to get immersed in the community, attend partner organization events, and make new friends. I plan to return to Atlanta next summer and am grateful to LDF and EJA for making my first stint in the city possible.