



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2025

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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#### Final Reflection:

After spending ten weeks working as a Summer Law Clerk and Equal Justice America Fellow at the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, my summer experience has officially come to an end. I am grateful for every one of you for reading my updates, wanting to learn more about this line of work, making donations to my classy page, and every other way that you supported me this summer. My internship might be over, but I will carry the lessons I learned forward with me as I continue my academic and professional career. Below are four takeaways I had from this summer, ranging from small moments to big wins, that made my time working in legal services even more meaningful.

1. Sometimes the best work you can engage in is listening. In law school, we are challenged tremendously to ensure that we will be prepared and capable when we begin our careers after graduation. We are instructed to find the issue at point in a case, we are directed to make our point clearly and concisely when writing, we are reminded to think critically about strong points for the adverse party, and so on and so on. The legal learning system is both a science and an art. This summer, however, I learned that it is not always about getting to the point. Many new clients in legal aid have been steered in circles through systems, repeatedly told "no" without an explanation, and ignored altogether. My supervisor this summer made it a point to always listen first, no matter how long the story was and even if the story was not directly relevant to the legal work we were engaging in. Toward the end of my internship, she pointed out that, for many of our clients, our client meetings were their first opportunity to truly be heard. "Too many people don't take the time to listen. Never stop listening."
2. File review can change the entire case. We were working with a client this summer who had a very large file we had to meticulously comb through at a local agency. We spent



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many long days reviewing the file to understand the development of the issue she was facing, build out the history of the relationship between the two parties, and look for every detail that could help our argument. File review does not always feel like the most glamorous work, and it can be a very tedious process. However, by taking our time and staying focused on our goal, we were able to figure out important information that benefitted our client's case.

3. Ask the right questions. This summer, I had the opportunity to engage in a lot of legal research projects. At the beginning, it often felt like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, as time went on, I improved by not only feeling confident enough to ask questions but knowing how to ask the right questions to make my research more efficient and my results more effective.
4. Free legal aid is fundamental to society. This is the takeaway that, in my opinion, matters the most. Everyone deserves the opportunity to access civil legal services, and income should never be a barrier. Right now, the future of funding for a lot of these organizations is uncertain, and the work has never been more important. While my updates about my internship might be over, I will never stop carrying that message. Please carry it with you and remind whoever is willing to listen.