



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

NAME	Hayley Broich
LAW SCHOOL	Brooklyn Law School
ORGANIZATION	The Legal Aid Society

Final Reflection:

This summer at The Legal Aid Society's Decarceration Project has been exactly the experience I needed to re-energize me as I head into my final year of law school. It reminded me why I came to law school in the first place and reinforced my commitment to doing this work full time after graduation.

From my first day, I was struck by the intentionality with which the attorneys approached not only their clients' cases, but also our growth as interns. Their mentorship was never perfunctory. It was generous, thoughtful, and rooted in the same values that guide their advocacy. Even on the busiest days, they made space for our questions, encouraged our ideas, and treated our contributions as meaningful. Learning from such passionate, caring, and deeply skilled attorneys has been both humbling and motivating.

The work itself has been challenging in the best possible way. Whether drafting bail applications, preparing writs of habeas corpus, or meeting with clients before court appearances, I was constantly reminded that every task, no matter how routine it might seem on paper, carries real weight in someone's life. The cases were varied, but each one underscored the urgency and importance of reducing pretrial detention and resisting the injustices of the criminal legal system. That sense of purpose sustained me through the long hours and steep learning curves. Equally meaningful were the moments of connection with clients and their loved ones. These conversations, whether in person or over the phone, grounded the legal work in human relationships. They reminded me that advocacy is not just about arguments in court, but about showing up consistently and with care for people navigating some of the most difficult moments of their lives.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

As I prepare to return to school, I feel a renewed sense of clarity about the kind of lawyer I want to be. This internship did more than build my skills. It strengthened my resolve to fight for decarceration, to work in spaces where holistic, client-centered advocacy is the norm, and to stay rooted in the values that brought me to public defense. I am deeply grateful to the Decarceration Project for giving me the opportunity to learn from them, contribute to their work, and witness what uncompromising, compassionate advocacy looks like in practice.

I leave this summer feeling energized and more certain about the path ahead. The lessons I have learned here will guide me through my final year of law school and into my career. I am grateful to have been part of this team and to have seen firsthand what it looks like to advocate with both skill and heart. This experience has confirmed that this is the work I want to do, and I am more committed than ever to making it my life's work.