



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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LAW SCHOOL	George Washington University Law School
ORGANIZATION	Pangea Legal Services

Final Reflection:

It is perhaps an understatement to say that I had a transformative experience at Pangea Legal Services. This summer, I understood what it means to be on the frontlines of immigrant rights at a time of unprecedented attacks on our immigrant communities. The attorneys and paralegals I worked imbued humanity in spaces that were evidently void of it. This helped me envision what my own practice of the law could look like in the future.

My casework this summer primarily involved three defensive asylum cases for clients who were not detained: a gender-based asylum case, a political asylum case, and a race-and-gender-based asylum case. For these cases, I worked on compiling declarations reflecting the ways in which our client was persecuted in their home country, annotated tables of contents with country conditions research, and pre-hearing statements providing the legal precedents backing up our client's claims. I also helped facilitate a one-day clinic that helped dozens of asylum seekers obtain their Employment Authorization Document (EAD), also known as a work permit.

Through Pangea's presence in the Rapid Response Networks for three Bay Area counties, I also performed legal intakes with clients who were recently arrested and detained after their ICE check-ins or immigration court hearings—sometimes these were over the phone, if clients were already sent hundreds of miles away, or in-person, as they awaited being transported. I found the sheer speed through which people were being moved through this system most troubling and difficult to grapple with, as well as the disregard for the well-being and mere location of other human beings, simply because they are immigrants. It would take several phone calls and hours to track down where a client was transferred. But by the next day, they might have been moved farther, even to several states away. Much of my role also involved keeping their loved



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ones abreast of their most recent location. Legal consults from the attorneys continued getting pushed to the next day, or maybe even the next week, because of this swift, forced movement.

Towards the end of my internship, I was interviewed about the egregious things I saw this summer at an ICE field office in San Francisco by a reporter at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The piece was published online on August 8th and was in the Sunday print edition on August 10th. I thank the attorneys this summer who told me about the importance of bearing witness and the clients like Mr. Valera who taught me about the importance of speaking up. Here is a link, sans paywall: ["It was hell": Man recounts 4-day detention in S.F. ICE cell with zero beds and 6 other detainees.](#)

I am immensely grateful for the Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship, which not only supported me financially, but provided an outlet for me through which I was able to periodically reflect on the experiences I was having this summer.