



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Savannah Doelfel
LAW SCHOOL	Harvard Law School
ORGANIZATION	Cambridge & Somerville Legal Services

Final Reflection:

This summer I worked on issues related to special education, insurance, and housing. I drafted a complaint for a student with disabilities who was not receiving proper and safe transportation to school. I also expanded my legal writing skills by drafting appeals, requests for postponements, and letters to hearing officers. I drafted internal memorandums to explain asset limitations in certain local buildings, as well as specific details about MassHealth coverage. In the midst of the latest bill signed into effect by the current administration, I also created a chart for internal office use that describes the impacts the bill has on legal aid clients.

I also increased my skills in communication and advocacy. I helped clients advocate for both themselves and their family members. I provided guidance for how clients can navigate interactions with nursing homes, their landlords, and their building management. I also provided resources for funding services for clients who were having difficulty paying rent, as well as assisted pro se clients with drafting Answers and Discovery Materials documents. For multiple cases, I assisted with either drafting or explaining the final agreement. For other cases, I shadowed the attorney in court proceedings and gained experience in the logistics of district court. The work also allowed me to coordinate with other agencies, such as service centers, elder services, and mediation services.

I really enjoyed getting to know my clients and assisting them through both tough and exciting days. Some conversations were difficult, such as telling someone we could not take their case or delivering news about an unfavorable decision. Other calls were joyful such as discussing an agreement the client liked or watching their eviction threat get resolved. I learned how to set boundaries when clients became heated and also to hold space for those who needed someone to just listen for a few minutes. Working in legal aid this summer made me realize how much I enjoy public service and strengthened my desire to assist people directly in the future. The attorneys I worked with displayed a sense of passion for their work that was inspiring to see, and they also found ways to lighten up each other's days when the work seemed challenging. I look forward to finding ways to incorporate the skills and tools I learned this summer into future work!