



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2025

## EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Southern Center for Human Rights

### Final Reflection:

Thank you so much for you, your donors, and your organization's work so that I was able to be selected as an EJA fellow this summer. I worked at the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia. While it is an organization that is primarily known for its anti-death penalty advocacy and representation of clients on death row, I worked on substantive individual representation this summer focusing on getting folks out of prison. I worked on three separate projects: court-watching municipal court to develop litigation against the criminalization of poverty, advocating for parole an individual in Alabama who was sentenced with first degree murder, and serving as primary intern attorney for an incarcerated client who was seeking resentencing because his sentence was five years too long.

As someone whose background is mostly complex civil impact litigation cases prior to this summer, I really enjoyed working at Southern Center for Human rights, which mixes impact litigation and individual representation. Every single attorney and investigator worked on parole cases and resentencing cases in addition to their main impact cases such as 1983 suits against prisons and representation of individuals on death row. This supports their mission as an underground railroad of sorts to get people out of prison and off death row in the Deep South, which has some of the most brutal and violent prisons in the United States. I find this theory of change to fit into my views of the relationship between impact litigation and direct representation and am extremely interested in continuing to work at Southern Center in the future.

I also really enjoyed working with incarcerated people for the first time. My 2L year, I worked in housing court and represented indigent clients to help them stay in their homes. Working with incarcerated people is extremely different from working with indigent clients, as it



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is much more difficult to contact them. I had to learn the difference between calls on a recorded line or a secure line. I also was unable to contact my client directly, and had to wait until they called me, as the entire state of Alabama does not allow legal calls. I improved my trauma informed lawyering skills by working with my client's families, who had not seen their loved one in more than a decade. I also learned about professional responsibility in client communication and how to set boundaries so that I could manage burnout more effectively.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I am honored to have been a fellow, and I learned so much about working with incarcerated people, trauma informed lawyering, and my desires to work in both individual representation and impact litigation. Each and every one of my colleagues and co-interns had nuanced opinions about representing indigent and incarcerated people in the South.