



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Final Reflection:

This summer at the RICJ was filled with moments that reminded me why legal advocacy matters, but one client's case stands out above the rest.

She came to us in the middle of a housing dispute that had spiraled out of control. She had originally wanted to rent a basement apartment for a rate. But the lease she signed, after being assured that it was just a clerical error, listed her as renting a third-floor apartment for significantly more. For months, she had been paying for the basement unit she actually lived in, but because there was no written proof of the arrangement, the landlord claimed she owed thousands of dollars in back rent for the more expensive third-floor unit. The landlord's attorney had already initiated an eviction action.

When she sat down with us, she was anxious and frustrated. An eviction would jeopardize her credit, and the alleged debt was far beyond her means. Working with my supervising attorney, I helped review her lease, organize her payment records, and prepare for her hearings. We focused on avoiding any financial judgment against her. After several exchanges with the landlord's attorney, we secured an agreement that allowed her to move out on her own terms with no money owed and the ability to get her eviction sealed in a few weeks.

That case reinforced something I learned again and again this summer: legal victories aren't always about winning in court. Sometimes they're about creating an exit strategy that protects a client's dignity, finances, and future stability.

Alongside this work, I contributed to other projects aimed at broadening access to justice. I



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helped develop a Spanish-language resource guide to connect residents with food assistance, housing programs, medical care, and services for the elderly.

The summer was not without its challenges. Many clients faced systemic barriers: underfunded assistance programs, limited tenant protections, and landlords who counted on tenants not knowing their rights.