



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2025

## EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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### Final Reflection:

After concluding my summer internship with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid last week, it's time for my final #EJAFellowUpdate. During my time with TRLA and the Austin Tenants Council, I had the opportunity to get directly involved by assisting with intakes and drafting agreements between tenants and property owners to resolve disputes fairly.

In my work with the Austin Tenants Council, I got to help field intakes to assist tenants in the greater Austin area. Every day, we received a large influx of client contacts, both by phone and through online intakes. Whether the issue was related to unreasonable security deposit deductions, lockouts, the effects of foreclosure on tenants, or a potential need for a reasonable accommodation request, ATC's staff works incredibly hard to assist tenants. ATC fulfills a unique role in trying to help tenants get connected with the information they need and mediate communications between tenants and landlords to halt issues before litigation (and its associated costs) becomes an issue for both parties.

To get a better sense of the issues that have already begun to approach litigation, I also worked with the housing team in TRLA's Austin office. To assist these tenants, I communicated between both the tenant and their property manager with a goal of drafting agreements to protect our clients' interests and desired outcome. Both this direct client interaction and working with the mechanics of an agreement were great experiences that I feel helped develop important professional skills for the legal profession.



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Working on cases with the housing team also put into perspective how easily individuals can fall behind. Several of the tenants I assisted were older clients suffering from physical disabilities who had fallen behind on rent due to missed paperwork or unexpected life events. I feel lucky to have worked alongside a team with so much purpose and sensitivity. Even in difficult cases, I have seen staff at TRLA demonstrate great patience and persistence to help serve their community.

My experience this summer with TRLA was very affirming to my pursuit of a public interest path, and I am very grateful to everyone at TRLA and to Equal Justice America for supporting my internship.