



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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LAW SCHOOL	Stanford Law School
ORGANIZATION	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

Final Reflection:

I spent my summer interning for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in Downtown Los Angeles. Before attending law school and before this internship, I had only ever worked in direct immigration services. This summer was particularly valuable because I got a mix of direct client work and impact litigation on a broader scale. This mixed exposure made for an interesting summer pace-wise. Additionally, working in the context of immigration in Los Angeles this summer, made for especially critical work. This summer, Los Angeles was targeted by the Trump Administration as an “immigrant safe haven.” As a result, President Trump deployed the National Guard, active-duty Marines, and an increased amount of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to Los Angeles. National Guards lined the streets as people gathered to protest unlawful immigration removals and detention. ICE agents waited outside courtrooms ready to deport people as they left their immigration hearings. In all the hustle and bustle, eventually people began recording as cars were stopped, workplaces and homes were raided as proof of due process violations. MALDEF’s Downtown LA office took on multiple cases representing U.S. citizens who had been wrongfully detained by ICE.

In addition to these, I got to work on multiple groundbreaking cases, two of which stand out to me. One of the cases I worked on was surrounding potential age and ethnic discrimination in the workplace. For this case, I got to witness client interactions, depositions, and investigate different research questions. In many cases MALDEF takes on, a state or government actor is usually the opposing counsel. Therefore, there are different strategies employed when dealing with, questioning, and investigating these bodies. I got to learn more about these, as well as how to improve my research and writing skills in the context of a real client’s case.



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Additionally, I also got to work on an LGBTQ+ rights case dealing with educational discrimination. It was very fulfilling for me to witness the active intersection between Latino and LGBTQ+ rights. There has historically been a divide here, and it was great to see how MALDEF supported this impact litigation case along with many others. Because so many policies and laws changed rapidly under the Trump administration, much of my research involved looking into what is still good law to reference versus what has been overruled.

Overall, my time at MALDEF was very informative on both my personal and professional career outlook. I am excited to continue working on Latino civil rights throughout my legal career. There was also something personally special about being surrounded by so many Latinos in a legal space where the Latinos are not only the ones getting represented. The entire office had Latinos from down to all the interns to the President of MALDEF who worked out of our building. It was a life-changing experience that I will carry with me throughout the rest of my career and it would not have been possible without Equal Justice America's financial support.