



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Annalisa Solis
LAW SCHOOL	University of Wisconsin Law School
ORGANIZATION	Texas RioGrande Legal Aid

Final Reflection:

My summer clerkship with TRLA was extremely significant to me because I was able to make an impact in my hometown community, the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). TRLA is a nonprofit organization that provides free civil legal services to impoverished people in 68 counties in Southwest Texas, as well as representation for seasonal and migrant workers in six other southern states. My “why” for furthering my education has always revolved around the idea that I would lead a public interest career there, and this opportunity allowed me to begin building the connections to do so. The RGV is split into upper and lower halves, and I had the opportunity to work out of TRLA offices in each: Brownsville and Edinburg. Working in these two locations, as well as with team members across the state, gave me exposure to clients and cases in Cameron, Hidalgo, Bexar, Nueces, and Maverick Counties.

At TRLA, law clerks are assigned to a team and work under a managing attorney to assist them research legal questions, manage cases, and prepare documents. I was assigned to the Re-Entry Team, which specializes in filing petitions for expungement and nondisclosure of criminal record orders. In this role, I wrote extensive research memos, drafted petitions, and reviewed applicant’s criminal records among other duties. My managing attorney primarily filed petitions for expunction in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, and I had the opportunity to review criminal records from municipalities across Texas. In working with the different counties, I learned how to navigate the criminal records management systems of each county’s courts and policing agencies, and I have gained a holistic understanding of the different ways a county government can operate.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

This experience sharpened my legal skills, and I learned about the importance of public interest law through hands on experience. Indigent communities often have a lack of access to legal resources and paired with extensive criminal records, can have difficulty finding employment and applying for public benefits, among other basic necessities to sustain their lives and households. In speaking with clients, I learned just how vital our services were to their own and their families' wellbeing. After experiencing working with the extremely dedicated attorneys and staff that make up TRLA, I see just how impactful legal aid organizations are and how necessary it is to continue providing accessible legal services. This experience has affirmed how much I value the human connection in legal work and how fulfilling it is to support someone through each step of their journey in the legal system.