



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2025

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Community Immigration Legal Clinic

#### Final Reflection:

This summer, I had the privilege of working with the Community Immigration Legal Clinic (CILC) as an intern, focusing primarily on asylum and humanitarian relief cases. Although my start date shifted slightly due to last-minute changes, my first official day quickly set the tone for what would become one of the most meaningful experiences of my academic and professional journey. From day one, I felt both the urgency of the work and the weight of responsibility that comes with supporting individuals whose lives are shaped by our immigration system.

Much of my work centered on asylum cases. I assisted with preparing applications, gathering evidence, and helping clients navigate interviews and court proceedings. Each case told a story of resilience in the face of violence, persecution, and instability. While the broader political climate has created fear and uncertainty for immigrant communities, I witnessed firsthand how access to legal aid can mean the difference between despair and hope. Every approved asylum case, every family kept together, and every client empowered with knowledge of their rights felt like a small but profound victory.

In addition to asylum work, I supported survivors of violent crimes by assisting with U visa applications. Many of these clients were survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and other forms of abuse. Drafting their declarations required not only accuracy and attention to detail but also deep empathy and care. These were stories marked by trauma, resilience, and extraordinary courage. Navigating these conversations taught me how essential it is to create a space where clients feel safe and respected while still ensuring that their experiences are conveyed truthfully and powerfully in their applications. Bearing witness to their struggles reminded me that



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compassion and professionalism are not opposing forces — they must go hand in hand in this work.

I also had the opportunity to provide language support, translating documents and facilitating communication with clients who spoke limited English. These moments reminded me that sometimes the smallest acts—ensuring someone feels heard and understood—can have an outsized impact.

The work was not without challenges. Many cases carried urgency, with deadlines and high stakes, and the legal system often felt daunting for clients. Navigating trauma-informed interactions required patience, humility, and strength. Yet these challenges taught me lessons I will carry into my career: the importance of listening deeply, advocating tirelessly, and approaching each client with compassion and respect.

Looking back, this fellowship shaped me in ways I could not have anticipated. I strengthened my skills in legal writing, cross-cultural communication, and client-centered advocacy. More importantly, it reaffirmed my dedication to pursuing a career in public interest law. This summer has shown me the essential role that legal aid plays in advancing justice, protecting human dignity, and giving vulnerable communities a chance to thrive.

I am grateful to my supervisors, colleagues, and especially the clients who trusted me with their stories. Their courage has deepened my resolve to continue this work. As I move forward, I carry with me not just legal skills, but a renewed commitment to building a more just and compassionate system for all