



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2025

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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LAW SCHOOL	UCLA School of Law
ORGANIZATION	ACLU of Southern California

Final Reflection:

I had the most amazing summer interning at ACLU SoCal. I was excited going into my internship, but I wasn't prepared for how deeply the experience would impact me. I was given invaluable legal experience and was constantly reminded of the reason why I came to law school.

At the beginning of the internship, we were able to choose independent projects based on our interests that focused on legal research and writing. My first assignment was a review of past litigation involving the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs. I practiced my research skills in identifying relevant cases and then synthesized them into a memo highlighting those that best reflected the mission of the organization. My second assignment was fact-checking for a Deaths in Custody Project focused on Orange County jails. This was especially meaningful because I had worked extensively on a similar project on Los Angeles County jails before law school, which was one of the main drivers behind my decision to pursue a legal career. Furthermore, because of my previous experience conducting research into autopsy reports, I was able to offer feedback on the arguments included in the report. Learning that my mentor at ACLU had been collaborating with my former lab on the same project, and that it was tied to my hometown in OC, made the experience feel like a true full-circle moment that deepened my personal connection to the mission.

Relatively quickly into our internship, a series of ICE raids were held in the Los Angeles area, and many protests occurred as a result. I had the chance to watch attorneys build litigation from the ground up in response to the raids and the use of force at the protests. Seeing the teamwork, dedication, and urgency they brought to serving their community was inspiring. I truly felt like I was part of the team because it was all hands on deck. I was able to sit in on attorney meetings, learn investigative tools related to litigation, and conduct research that



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culminated in an internal memo to support the case. I also interviewed a protestor and drafted a declaration regarding her experience. What made this experience particularly powerful was the chance to connect directly with an individual impacted and to appreciate how significant the litigation was for the community. I was also able to attend a district court hearing on the legality of the raids, where I met a named plaintiff in the case. Witnessing the oral arguments, after reading the stories of those directly affected and seeing someone personally impacted watch attorneys advocate on their behalf, was one of the most meaningful moments of my law school journey.

By the end of my internship, I had gained litigation experience far beyond what I expected for my 1L summer and a renewed sense of purpose. The summer consistently reminded me of the reasons I came to law school: to use my legal training to make an impact in my community. The EJA Fellowship made it possible for me to spend my summer at the very organization I had hoped to join when I first began law school, and I will carry the lessons of this experience with me throughout my career.