



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Madison Mede
LAW SCHOOL	American University Washington College of Law
ORGANIZATION	Equal Justice Works – Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (El Paso)

Update 1: I have been working on multiple cases relating to H-2A and H-2B visas, with one involving human trafficking claims. I have been drafting subpoenas and beginning to prepare for my first outreach trip. On my outreach trip I will be traveling to the bridge near the border and follow the workers to their assignments to inform them about their rights. Finally, I have begun to research more for a writing assignment relating to insurance claims and human trafficking.

Update 2: After nearly a month with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, I remain incredibly grateful for this opportunity and the chance to learn from such a dedicated team.

Over the past few weeks, I have observed and contributed to multiple civil cases at different stages of litigation, gaining invaluable insight into the legal process and developing practical skills that will serve me throughout my legal career.

A sincere thank you to Equal Justice America and Equal Justice Works for making this experience possible and for supporting the next generation of public interest attorneys

Update 3: Over the past month, I had the privilege of traveling across the Texas Panhandle to conduct outreach with H-2A farmworkers, educating them about their legal rights and available resources. Back in the office, I researched and drafted memoranda addressing issues involving H-2A employment violations, human trafficking, and post-judgment procedures to help ensure creditors receive the judgments they are entitled to. These experiences strengthened my legal research and writing skills while reinforcing my commitment to expanding access to justice for underserved communities. Beyond the legal work, one of the most rewarding parts of this internship has been the people. I am incredibly grateful for the attorneys, advocates, and fellow interns who generously shared their knowledge, mentorship, and passion for public interest law.



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The relationships and lessons I've gained this summer are ones I will carry with me throughout my legal career. A sincere thank you to Equal Justice America and Equal Justice Works for making this experience possible and for investing in the next generation of public interest attorneys. I am also deeply grateful to Texas RioGrande Legal Aid for welcoming me into its mission and for allowing me to contribute to such meaningful work. I'm excited to carry these experiences with me as I continue my legal education and remain committed to advocating for vulnerable communities.

Update 4: As my summer clerkship with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid comes to an end, I have been reflecting on my incredibly meaningful experience advocating for farmworkers and migrant workers. Over the past several weeks, I had the opportunity to work on a variety of legal and advocacy-related tasks. I assisted with drafting and reviewing legal documents, supported ongoing litigation work, and contributed to research and factual investigation related to case development and enforcement efforts. I also participated in meetings focused on employment issues affecting H-2A workers, as well as broader case and litigation strategy discussions. However, some of my most meaningful experiences took place outside of the office. I accompanied outreach trips across New Mexico and Texas to help inform H-2A and migrant workers about their rights and the legal resources available to them. I also helped facilitate local clothing donation drives to provide resources needed to farmworker communities. This experience has given me a greater insight into the way legal advocacy, community outreach, and direct services intersect. I am incredibly grateful to the attorneys, staff, and fellow advocates at TRLA who welcomed me, challenged me, and allowed me to contribute to such important work. I will be returning to American University Washington College of Law with a stronger commitment to serving workers and immigrant communities, and with a renewed appreciation for the power of legal advocacy to create meaningful change.

Final Reflection: My fellowship with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my law school career. Over the course of the summer, I had the opportunity to work alongside attorneys advocating for farmworkers and migrant workers while developing my own skills as a legal researcher, advocate, and emerging public interest attorney. One of the most valuable aspects of my fellowship was the opportunity to take on complex legal assignments and contribute to ongoing litigation. I drafted Touhy letters and subpoenas to third parties, reviewed and edited legal documents, drafted a section of a federal motion for default judgment, and conducted factual investigation related to the collection of judgment funds. I was also entrusted with high-level research involving complex and intersectional legal issues. These assignments challenged me to think critically, work independently, and apply my legal training to real cases where the research could directly affect a client's ability to obtain justice.



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My experience also extended beyond traditional legal work. Although my office did not provide many opportunities to interact directly with clients, I actively sought opportunities to engage with the community. I participated in outreach trips throughout Texas and New Mexico, where I helped inform H-2A and migrant workers about their rights and available resources. I also facilitated a local clothing donation drive for farmworker communities. These experiences reminded me that public interest law extends beyond the courtroom and that meaningful advocacy requires meeting communities where they are.

Throughout the fellowship, I also grew as a leader. I learned the importance of taking initiative, whether by volunteering for community support efforts, conducting additional factual research before being asked, or speaking up when I recognized an opportunity to improve a process or support a colleague. Balancing these responsibilities with ongoing case assignments strengthened my ability to communicate proactively, manage competing priorities, and remain adaptable when unexpected opportunities arose.

Most importantly, this fellowship strengthened my commitment to public interest law. I leave TRLA with greater confidence in my legal research and analytical abilities, but also with a deeper understanding of the responsibility attorneys have to use those skills in service of communities that face significant barriers to justice. I am incredibly grateful to the attorneys and staff who challenged me, trusted me with meaningful work, and allowed me to grow throughout this experience. This summer has reinforced not only the kind of lawyer I hope to become, but also the kind of advocate and leader I want to be.