



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Eva Rose Cole
LAW SCHOOL	Campbell University School of Law
ORGANIZATION	North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services

Update 1: This summer, I'm fortunate to work with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, Inc. (NCPLS) as an Equal Justice America Fellow! Over the past few weeks, I've become integrated into the office community, getting to know the attorneys, paralegals, staff, and fellow interns. Building those relationships has helped me understand the collaborative nature of legal aid work and the many roles required to do this work effectively.

My work has included both post-conviction and civil matters, exposing me to a wide range of issues that incarcerated individuals face. One project that has been especially meaningful involves assisting with a case concerning serious failures in the care and protection of an incarcerated person experiencing a mental health crisis. I've helped research legal issues and review case materials, and I'll be accompanying supervising attorneys on a prison visit with the client soon.

I also had the opportunity to attend an orientation with the Center for Death Penalty Litigation (CDPL) last week. During the orientation, I learned about CDPL's work representing individuals facing the death penalty and supporting attorneys handling capital cases throughout North Carolina. I learned how racial bias and disparities in charging decisions, jury selection, sentencing, and access to resources can shape outcomes in the criminal legal system.

I'm excited to continue my work with NCPLS this summer. More updates to come!

Update 2:

I'm now halfway through my summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, and I continue to be reminded how multifaceted prison legal advocacy is.



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Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with an incarcerated client whose case centers on the prison's failure to adequately protect him during a mental health crisis. After doing lots of legal research and reviewing case records, it was incredibly meaningful to speak with the client in person and better understand the human impact behind the work we do.

I've also continued to develop my legal research and writing skills by reviewing and summarizing a trial transcript and drafting a 25-year review petition for a client sentenced to life without parole. These projects have given me a better understanding of the numerous different ways legal advocacy can support incarcerated people.

Outside of casework, my fellow interns and I watched the Oscar-nominated film "The Alabama Solution", a documentary examining conditions within Alabama's prison system. This sparked important discussions about abuse, overcrowding, and corruption within correctional institutions across the country.

As the summer continues, I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute to work that advances dignity and access to justice for all!

Update 3: As my summer with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services continues, I've had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects that have strengthened my legal research, writing, and advocacy skills.

One of the projects I've been working on has been preparing jail file review memos. This involves reviewing letters and questionnaires from potential clients raising concerns about issues such as excessive use of force, unconstitutional conditions of confinement, and inadequate medical care in jail. After reviewing the information, I summarize the facts, identify potential claims, and make recommendations to the supervising attorney about how the office should proceed.

I also completed a medical records review for an incarcerated client, identifying gaps in medication administration and examining the reasons those interruptions occurred. This work has shown me how difficult it often is to access appropriate medical care within correctional facilities, and how much of an impact careful records review can have.

In addition, I drafted a 25-year review petition and finalized my summary of a trial transcript for two clients sentenced to life in prison. Each of these projects has given me greater insight into the many ways advocacy can support incarcerated individuals at different stages of their cases.



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Update 4: My summer internship with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, Inc. will be coming to a close soon. Over the past few weeks, I've continued working on a variety of civil and post-conviction matters and seeing cases through different stages of the process.

Recently, I finished preparing jail file review memos and drafted closing letters for those cases. I also wrote an update letter for a client whose 25-year review petition is currently pending, keeping them informed about the status of their case. Additionally, I began a research project examining cases in which defense attorneys admitted a client's guilt without the client's consent to discover what kind of relief is available to those defendants. I also drafted a Motion for Appropriate Relief and a proposed consent order for a client who was incorrectly sentenced to consecutive rather than concurrent sentences.

Outside of casework, our office took a field trip to see the Stitching Stories Reimagined exhibit at Dix Park! The installation, inspired by a quilt created by incarcerated women at North Carolina Correctional Institution for Women during the COVID-19 pandemic, tells the stories of 62 women through public art. We also had the opportunity to hear one of the quilt's creators speak about the project and its impact. It was a meaningful reminder of the importance of centering the voices and lived experiences of the real people affected by the prison system. Learn more about the exhibit here: <https://raleighnc.gov/arts/services/public-art/stitching-stories-reimagined>

I'm grateful for everything I've learned this summer and for the opportunity to contribute to NCPLS's work on behalf of incarcerated clients.

Final Reflection: As I reflect on my summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, Inc., I'm struck by how much this experience expanded my understanding of what meaningful legal advocacy looks like. I entered the summer hoping to strengthen my legal research and writing skills, but I am leaving with a much deeper appreciation for the responsibility that comes with representing incarcerated people and the importance of keeping clients at the center of that work.

Throughout the summer, I worked on both civil and post-conviction matters involving issues such as inadequate medical care, conditions of confinement, and excessive force. I reviewed medical records, prepared jail file review memos, summarized a trial transcript, drafted a 25-year review petition, and researched potential avenues for post-conviction relief. Near the end of my internship, I also drafted a Motion for Appropriate Relief and proposed consent order for a client who had been incorrectly sentenced to consecutive rather than concurrent sentences.



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Each assignment showed me how careful research, drafting, and attention to detail can have a real impact on a client's life. One experience that will stay with me was meeting an incarcerated client whose case involved the prison's failure to adequately protect him during a mental health crisis. I had spent significant time researching the legal issues and reviewing records before the visit, but speaking with him in person was the most impactful for me. It reminded me that behind every record, transcript, and legal claim is a person whose life has been directly affected by the prison system.

Visiting the Stitching Stories Reimagined exhibit and hearing from one of the incarcerated women who helped create the original quilt was a powerful reminder of the importance of centering the voices and experiences of people affected by incarceration. This summer also taught me that victories in public interest work are not always dramatic. Sometimes they are identifying an overlooked issue in a record, keeping a client informed, developing a stronger legal argument, or simply ensuring that someone feels heard. I leave NCPLS with stronger legal skills, but more importantly, with a clearer understanding of the kind of advocate I hope to become thoughtful, thorough, compassionate, and committed to treating every client with dignity. I am so grateful to Equal Justice America and everyone at NCPLS for giving me the opportunity to learn from and contribute to this work.