



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Alexa Jimenez
LAW SCHOOL	Columbia Law School
ORGANIZATION	Urban Resource Institute

Update 1: I am excited to share that I will be spending my summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow at Urban Resource Institute's Legal Education and Advocacy Program.

LEAP provides trauma-informed, on-site legal services to survivors of domestic violence directly within shelter, removing the burden of navigating an unfamiliar and often intimidating legal system alone. In this role, I will assist survivors with matters involving child custody, divorce, orders of protection, and immigration relief. For many of the individuals LEAP serves, particularly undocumented survivors, this program is the only accessible pathway to legal protection and family stability.

Without legal intervention, survivors risk losing custody of their children, their housing, their income, and in some cases, their immigration status. LEAP serves approximately 250 survivors and families across NYC every year. I chose to pursue this fellowship because I believe that access to justice is a fundamental right, and that the law should be a source of protection for the most vulnerable.

I am writing to ask for your support of my Equal Justice America fundraiser. EJA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent law students from pursuing public interest careers. Public interest legal work is very underfunded, and without fellowships and donor support, many law students are unable to afford to spend their summers serving those who need legal help most. Your donation helps change that. It will support EJA's broader mission of building a pipeline of public interest lawyers committed to expanding access to justice and ensures that future fellows can do this work across the country.

I would be deeply grateful for a contribution of any amount. No gift is too small, and every dollar makes a meaningful difference in sustaining this work.



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Update 2: I recently began my summer internship with Urban Resource Institute's Legal Education Advocacy Project (LEAP), and over the past few weeks, I've already gained incredibly meaningful hands-on experience working with immigrant survivors and families navigating complex legal challenges.

Last week, I completed my first shelter visit to one of URI's domestic violence shelters, where I was able to meet directly with survivors, conduct client interviews and legal intakes, and assist in providing legal advice alongside my supervising attorney. Being able to engage with clients in person and hear their stories firsthand was both deeply humbling and impactful.

So far this summer, I have assisted attorneys working on U-Visa, Asylum, T-Visa, VAWA, and SIJS cases, helping conduct client interviews in Spanish, drafting legal documents, and supporting clients seeking safety and stability in the United States. Each conversation has reinforced how much courage it takes for individuals to come forward and seek protection after experiencing trauma.

This experience continues to show me how essential legal aid organizations are. For so many vulnerable individuals and families, access to justice would simply not be possible without free legal representation and advocates committed to ensuring that support exists regardless of someone's financial circumstances.

Update 3: It's hard to believe I've already completed my first month as an Equal Justice America Fellow with Urban Resource Institute's Legal Education Advocacy Project (LEAP). This experience has already been one of the most meaningful parts of my legal education, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve immigrant survivors and families navigating complex legal challenges.

Over the past month, I've assisted on U-Visa, Asylum, T-Visa, VAWA, and SIJS matters, conducted client interviews and legal intakes in both English and Spanish, completed two shelter visits to meet directly with survivors of domestic violence, and drafted my first client affidavit. Being entrusted with these responsibilities so early in my legal career has been both humbling and incredibly rewarding.

Every client I meet reminds me that access to legal representation can make an extraordinary difference in someone's life. It has reinforced why organizations like URI are so vital in ensuring that survivors and vulnerable families receive the support and advocacy they deserve, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Update 4: I recently started my internship with Urban Resource Institute's Legal Education Advocacy Project (LEAP), and in just two weeks I have already gained invaluable experience working with immigrant survivors and families.



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So far, I have assisted LEAP attorneys with U-Visa, Asylum, VAWA, and SIJS cases, conducting client interviews in Spanish and helping with Spanish-language legal documents. It has been both challenging and humbling to hear clients' stories and witness their resilience in the face of incredible hardship.

This experience has reinforced for me how important legal aid is. Many individuals seeking safety and stability would be unable to navigate the immigration system without free legal representation. Legal aid organizations ensure that justice is accessible regardless of a person's income or circumstances.

Final Reflection: This summer, I had the privilege of working with the Urban Resource Institute's Legal Education Advocacy Project, supporting survivors of domestic violence and other clients navigating complex immigration and family-related legal matters.

One of the most meaningful parts of this experience was serving clients from the Dominican Republic, my family's country of origin. Being able to speak Spanish with my clients was incredibly special to me. Being able to speak Spanish with clients made our communication more seamless and made them feel more comfortable, understood, and respected while discussing some of the most difficult experiences of their lives.

Through my work, I assisted with U-Visa, VAWA, asylum, and SIJS matters, conducted client interviews and intakes, helped prepare Spanish-language legal documents, and visited the shelter where LEAP provides services. Knowing my work could meaningfully affect someone's safety, family, and future added urgency to even the smallest tasks and made me acutely aware of the responsibility in my hands.

The biggest lesson I am taking away from this experience is the importance of empathy, kindness, and transparency in client advocacy. Clients deserve to understand what is happening in their cases, to have their questions answered honestly, and to feel that their attorney is truly listening to them. Effective advocacy can look like explaining something for the third time, acknowledging when you do not have an answer yet, or simply giving someone the space to tell their story. These moments can make a huge difference to someone who is already navigating an overwhelming situation. This experience has shaped the kind of lawyer I hope to become. I came into LEAP wanting to learn how to be a better advocate, and I am leaving with a deeper understanding that good lawyering demands radical empathy and understanding along with a knowledge of the legal system.

I am incredibly grateful to Equal Justice America for making this experience possible and to the attorneys and clients at URI LEAP who taught me so much this summer.