



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Final Reflection: Now that my internship has come to an end, I have had the opportunity to reflect on my experiences.

I had the opportunity to work on a case in which a client who did not speak English was the victim of a fraudulent rental assistance scheme by her landlord. She was given multiple illegal leases only a few months apart from each other and pressured to sign the documents without an interpreter. This client was not aware that her landlord's actions were illegal until he caused her to lose her rental assistance entirely. NYLAG helped her stay in her home with her children safely and set her on the path to have her rental assistance restored. This case was incredibly impactful to be a part of. The client and her landlord had vastly different access to power and resources, and he chose to exploit her for personal financial gain for this very reason. If it were not for NYLAG's legal assistance this entire family may have lost their housing and stability. Even though the landlord's actions were in violation of the law, the client did not have the resources to fight him or advocate for herself in court. I could see so clearly the ripple effect of housing cases. Egregious illegal actions take place under the cover of fear when these landlords target vulnerable populations such as the elderly or immigrants. What was one of many cases in my supervisor's caseload was singular and monumental for the party seeking protection.

I knew going into this internship that tenant protection was a cause close to my heart but being able to be a part of helping someone stay housed was deeply moving and meaningful. Realizing the depth of community that exists between colleagues in the public interest space was also a source of great hope for me. EJA gave me the ability to participate directly in increasing access to justice, and I am deeply appreciative for the perspective and practical skills I gained through such work. Even the cases that may seem "small" are valuable and life-changing for the people seeking free legal help.