



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1:

And summer is in full swing! I had the privilege to start my role as a Domestic Violence Law Unit Legal Intern at New York Legal Assistance Group on Monday, May 26th, and this experience has already been remarkably insightful, moving, and inspiring.

I have the opportunity to work with not only talented attorneys, staff, and interns but also with clients who have not let their struggles define their lives as strong individuals who are determined to make a change for themselves. I am beyond lucky to learn from the staff around me as well as these clients, and I look forward to continuing to develop my skills as an advocate. I have already worked on immigration cases for domestic violence victims, uncontested and contested divorces, Orders of Protection, and have had the incredible opportunities to meet with clients face-to-face to hear about their journeys and determine the best possible ways to help them. This internship has been extremely hands-on, and I am confident that I will come out of this summer more prepared than ever to serve and advocate for those whose voices have been quieted by their abusers and, often, the system.

Clients do not seek the services of a nonprofit such as NYLAG unless they are in some of the deepest troubles of their lives. It is my mission this summer (and in my future legal career) to serve the people who contribute to the very heartbeat of the New York City community that I love so much. I am so grateful to be here.

Update 2:

This summer, my internship with New York Legal Assistance Group's Domestic Violence Law Unit has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my legal education. Working directly with survivors seeking safety, stability, and justice has given me a deeper understanding of both the



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challenges many New Yorkers face and the critical role legal advocacy plays in addressing those challenges.

Throughout the internship, I have assisted with a variety of matters involving family law and immigration relief, including helping prepare affidavits, organizing supporting evidence, and working closely with attorneys on client cases. More importantly, I have had the opportunity to listen to clients' stories and witness the extraordinary resilience they demonstrate while navigating difficult and often traumatic circumstances. Their courage has reinforced my commitment to public interest law and reminded me that effective advocacy begins with empathy, patience, and respect.

This experience has also inspired me to give back beyond my work in the office. On August 15, I will swim 28.5 miles around Manhattan to raise funds for NYLAG and the Domestic Violence Law Unit. As a former competitive swimmer, I have learned that perseverance is essential to overcoming challenges. This summer, however, I have been continually inspired by the perseverance of NYLAG's clients, whose strength far exceeds any challenge I will encounter in the water. Supporting NYLAG through this fundraiser is a small way to contribute to an organization whose work has profoundly shaped my understanding of justice, service, and community.

Update 3:

One of the most rewarding aspects of my internship with NYLAG's Domestic Violence Law Unit has been the opportunity to meet with clients face to face. While drafting affidavits, preparing legal documents, and conducting research are all meaningful parts of the work, sitting across the table from the individuals we serve has given those tasks a much deeper sense of purpose.

Meeting clients has reminded me that every document I draft and every detail I review directly affects a real person who has entrusted our office with an incredibly important chapter of their life. Hearing clients share their stories and witnessing both their vulnerability and resilience has motivated me to approach every assignment with even greater care and attention to detail. It has reinforced the importance of producing work that is not only legally sound, but also thoughtful, compassionate, and worthy of the trust our clients place in us.

These interactions have also strengthened my desire to pursue a career in public interest law. Seeing firsthand the difference that dedicated legal advocates can make in someone's life has been both inspiring and affirming. This internship has shown me that public interest work combines the aspects of the legal profession that I value most: meaningful client relationships, rigorous legal advocacy, and the opportunity to use my skills in service of others. I leave each



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client meeting more motivated than the last, and even more confident that this is the kind of work I hope to dedicate my career to.

Update 4:

One of the privileges of working in legal aid is that every so often, the paperwork gives way to a person.

This week, I met with a client to conduct an interview for her affidavit and complete the final paperwork in her case. Before she ever became a file on my desk or a draft on my computer, she was simply a woman sitting across from me, trusting our team with some of the most painful moments of her life. As she recounted her experiences, she became emotional. Yet even through her tears, she remained remarkably gracious and kind. I left the meeting struck not only by what she had endured, but by the humanity she continued to extend to others despite it.

It is impossible to leave a conversation like that unchanged. As law students, we spend so much time learning doctrine, refining our writing, and perfecting legal arguments. Those skills are essential, but meetings like this remind me that they are only tools. The real work begins with listening. Every affidavit we draft is more than a legal document; it is someone's attempt to preserve the truth of their experience and to ask the legal system to see them fully.

Walking back to my desk, I found myself looking at my work differently. The edits that once felt routine suddenly carried greater weight because I knew the person behind every sentence. That perspective has made me a more careful writer, a more thoughtful advocate, and, I hope, a more compassionate future attorney.

This summer has reaffirmed that effective advocacy requires more than legal knowledge. It requires empathy, patience, and humility to recognize that being invited into someone's story is both a privilege and a responsibility. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue learning those lessons through my work at NYLAG.

Final Reflection:

When I began my summer with New York Legal Assistance Group's Domestic Violence Law Unit, I hoped to become a stronger legal advocate. I did not anticipate how profoundly the people I met would shape my understanding of what that advocacy means.

Over the course of the summer, I worked on matters involving immigration relief, divorce, Orders of Protection, and other legal issues affecting survivors of domestic violence. I researched, drafted affidavits, organized evidence, prepared legal documents, and learned from



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attorneys whose commitment to their clients continually inspired me. But the moments I will remember most happened when the paperwork gave way to a person.

Sitting across from clients and listening as they entrusted me with extraordinarily difficult parts of their lives changed the way I approached my work. An affidavit stopped being an assignment to complete and became someone's story that I had been trusted to tell carefully. A seemingly small edit mattered because the words on the page represented a real person seeking safety, stability, or a new beginning. I learned that strong advocacy requires rigorous legal work, but also patience, empathy, and humility to listen before speaking.

My commitment to NYLAG also extended beyond the office this summer. On August 15, I completed the 28.5-mile 20 Bridges swim around Manhattan while fundraising for NYLAG and the Domestic Violence Law Unit. After spending 17 years as a competitive swimmer, swimming has taught me much about perseverance. This summer, however, I encountered an entirely different kind of strength in NYLAG's clients. Carrying their stories with me around Manhattan made an already meaningful personal challenge represent something much larger than myself, and I was incredibly proud to use a sport I love to support an organization and community that have come to mean so much to me.

Perhaps the clearest indication of how deeply this experience affected me is that I am not ready for it to end. This fall, I will return to NYLAG as an extern and continue working with the Domestic Violence Law Unit. What began as a summer internship has become an important part of the advocate I hope to be.

I entered this fellowship wanting to learn how lawyers can serve people during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. I leave it more certain than ever that public interest work is where I belong, and I am deeply grateful to the clients who trusted me enough to help teach me why.