



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: During my first week as an Equal Justice America Fellow at Pangea Legal Services, I have already been exposed to the realities of deportation defense and the urgent nature of immigration advocacy. Although I have only just begun, the experience has been both eye-opening and deeply meaningful.

One of the most impactful experiences of the week was participating in Pangea's rapid response efforts following ICE enforcement activity. Seeing attorneys and advocates mobilize quickly to support affected families underscored the importance of providing immediate legal assistance and community support during moments of crisis. It also highlighted how legal advocacy extends beyond the courtroom and often requires responding to urgent and rapidly evolving circumstances.

I have also had the opportunity to observe and assist with client-facing work. Through intake processes and interactions with individuals navigating complex immigration proceedings, I have gained firsthand insight into the human dimension of deportation defense. Listening to clients share their experiences and concerns has reinforced the importance of trauma-informed advocacy and the trust that effective representation requires. In addition to direct client work, I have begun supporting case preparation and learning about the various forms of relief available to noncitizens facing removal. Working alongside dedicated attorneys and staff has given me greater appreciation for the strategic, detail-oriented, and compassionate nature of immigration practice.

Even in just one week, this fellowship has strengthened my commitment to public interest law and demonstrated the profound impact that legal representation can have on individuals and families confronting uncertainty. I look forward to continuing to learn from the Pangea team



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and to contributing to their mission of protecting the fundamental right to move through direct legal representation, education, and community empowerment.

Update 2: As an Equal Justice America Summer Fellow at Pangea Legal Services, I have continued to gain meaningful experience in deportation defense, direct client advocacy, and immigration policy. This month, I took on greater responsibility by accompanying my first client to an ICE check-in independently. I prepared by reviewing the client's procedural history, coordinating with supervising attorneys, and ensuring all necessary documentation was in order. During the appointment, I helped guide the client through the process, communicated with ICE officers, and provided support and reassurance throughout what can be an especially stressful experience.

I also helped staff an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) clinic last week, where we provided free legal assistance to immigrant community members seeking work permits and renewals. The clinic brought together attorneys, law students, and volunteers from Pangea and partner organizations, highlighting the importance of collaboration in expanding access to legal services and increasing capacity to serve vulnerable communities.

In addition to my direct services work, I have been assisting with immigration policy advocacy by drafting comments during the federal rulemaking process in response to proposed agency regulations affecting asylum seekers. Through this work, I have gained exposure to administrative law and the ways in which public interest organizations can influence policy through notice-and-comment procedures.

Through my Equal Justice America Fellowship, I have had the opportunity to see firsthand the impact that both individual representation and systemic advocacy can have on immigrant communities. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to public interest law and reinforced the importance of providing compassionate, client-centered legal services while advocating for more equitable immigration policies.

Update 3: Over the past several weeks of my Equal Justice America Summer Fellowship at Pangea Legal Services, I have continued to build on my experience by taking on increasingly substantive legal work supporting immigrants at every stage of the legal process. From preparing clients for asylum interviews to conducting legal research and meeting with individuals in detention, each new responsibility has provided valuable insight into the many facets of immigration advocacy.

One of my primary responsibilities has been preparing asylum clients for their upcoming interviews by conducting declaration re-readings. During these meetings, I carefully review



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clients previously submitted declarations with them, answer questions, identify any necessary updates or corrections, and ensure they feel prepared to recount often deeply traumatic experiences during their interviews.

I have also continued researching and compiling Additional Table of Contents (ATOC) materials for asylum applications. This work involves locating and analyzing recent country conditions reports, human rights documentation, and other supporting evidence to strengthen clients' claims and ensure applications reflect the most current conditions in their countries of origin. Through this process, I have gained a deeper appreciation for the critical role that thorough legal and factual research plays in successful asylum advocacy.

In addition, I have participated in client consultations with individuals in immigration detention and in prison, observing and assisting attorneys as they assess potential forms of relief and advise clients navigating complex legal circumstances. These consultations have provided valuable insight into the unique challenges faced by detained individuals and the importance of ensuring meaningful access to legal representation.

Beyond client-facing work, I have assisted with legal research for a federal appellate matter, researching relevant case law and developing legal analysis to support ongoing litigation. Working on both individual client matters and broader legal advocacy has reinforced how careful research, persuasive legal writing, and direct representation work together to advance justice for immigrant communities.

Each new assignment during my Equal Justice America Fellowship has expanded both my practical legal skills and my understanding of the many ways public interest attorneys advocate for their clients. Whether preparing clients for asylum interviews, strengthening evidentiary submissions, conducting legal research, or supporting detained individuals, I continue to see the profound impact that dedicated legal representation can have on the lives of immigrants and their families.

Update 4: The past few weeks have given me a much deeper look into the immigration court process. I had the opportunity to observe proceedings before the Immigration Judge, which helped me better understand how hearings unfold in practice and how legal arguments, testimony, and procedural issues come together in the courtroom. Seeing the process firsthand provided valuable context for the motions, declarations, and filings I've been working on throughout the summer.

I've also continued to really enjoy the direct client service aspect of my internship. Working directly with clients, whether through declaration readbacks, consultations, or other case



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support, has been one of the most meaningful parts of my summer. Building relationships with clients and helping them navigate an incredibly complex legal system has reinforced why I wanted to pursue this work in the first place.

On the litigation side, I've now had the opportunity to draft several motions and other legal filings under the guidance of my supervising attorneys. Drafting these motions has been an invaluable learning experience, allowing me to strengthen my legal research, writing, and advocacy skills while gaining a better understanding of litigation strategy in immigration court. It has been especially rewarding to see how the legal work completed behind the scenes connects to what ultimately happens in the courtroom.

Each week at Pangea continues to deepen both my practical legal skills and my commitment to immigrant advocacy. I am incredibly grateful to Equal Justice America for making this opportunity possible and look forward to continuing to learn from both my clients and colleagues throughout the remainder of the summer.

Final Reflection: This summer, I had the opportunity to serve as an Equal Justice America Fellow at Pangea Legal Services in San Francisco. Looking back, I am incredibly grateful for how much responsibility, trust, and direct client experience I was given over the course of the summer. More than anything, this experience reminded me why I wanted to go to law school and what it means to use a legal education in service of real people.

I came into the summer after completing my first year of law school, having spent the year learning how to read cases, research legal questions, and construct legal arguments. At Pangea, I began to understand what those skills look like when there is an actual person depending on the work you are doing. I assisted with asylum and other immigration matters, conducted client interviews and declaration readbacks, worked on legal research and writing, and participated in rapid response efforts. I also had the opportunity to work directly with Spanish-speaking clients, which made the experience especially meaningful to me.

Some of the moments I will remember most were also the simplest: sitting with clients for hours as they told me about experiences that were incredibly difficult to revisit, working through a declaration sentence by sentence, or helping someone understand what was going to happen next in their case. I learned quickly that being a good advocate is not just about knowing the law. It is also about knowing when to ask another question, when to listen, how to make someone feel comfortable enough to tell you something difficult, and how to treat the person behind a case file with dignity.



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The summer also took place during an especially uncertain and frightening period for many immigrant communities. Participating in rapid response and seeing that fear up close made the stakes of this work feel very real. At the same time, I was able to see how attorneys, advocates, interpreters, and community organizations come together to respond. I was constantly impressed by the people at Pangea and by how much care they brought to their work even when the circumstances were difficult.

I also appreciated the opportunity to see advocacy beyond individual representation. Through community and policy work, including speaking with community members in Spanish about their experiences and helping incorporate their voices into advocacy efforts, I saw how lawyers can use what they learn from individual clients to push for broader change.

I am leaving this summer with stronger legal research, writing, interviewing, and advocacy skills, but I am also leaving with a much clearer sense of the kind of lawyer I hope to become. I know that my career may take me into different areas of law, but I want direct service, pro bono work, and a commitment to access to justice to remain part of it.

I am deeply grateful to Equal Justice America for supporting my fellowship and making it possible for me to spend my summer doing this work. I am equally grateful to the Pangea team for trusting me, teaching me, and allowing me to learn from their clients. Most of all, I am grateful to the clients who trusted me with their stories. I will carry those conversations, and what they taught me about the responsibility that comes with being a lawyer, with me throughout the rest of law school and my career.