



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Kiersten Hash
LAW SCHOOL	Harvard Law School
ORGANIZATION	ACLU of Texas

Update 1: This past couple of weeks have been very exciting and impactful already. So far, I participated in intern orientation, in-person legal team orientation, and got my first assignment. The intern orientation was great as I was able to connect with the other interns and learn a lot about the ACLU of Texas's history, work, and future goals. I was most grateful to join their legal team call in the first week and hear their recent accomplishments. I was honored to hear all they are doing to protect the rights of the most vulnerable Texans.

This past week, I attended the in-person orientation for the legal team in the Houston office. Not only did I enjoy learning more about all of their amazing work, but I witnessed firsthand the amazing office culture. It truly felt like a family! I cannot wait to continue to grow those connections. Finally, I am already enjoying working on my first assignment. It gets to the heart of the substantive issues around immigration that I am interested in, and I am growing my research and writing skills. It is so important to do this work to support marginalized communities through direct services or impact litigation. In conclusion, I am happy and looking forward to what is to come!

Update 2: The past two weeks have been great! I submitted my first assignment, met with a couple of the attorneys in my office for check ins, and received a few more assignments. I also worked in person this past week and enjoyed connecting with my fellow interns in the office.

First, I completed my first assignment, which was a legal memo regarding immigration policy changes. I worked diligently to track changes and understand the legal significance of said changes. I am looking forward to the feedback that my supervising attorney will give me.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

I also got to meet with a few of the attorneys in my office to further introduce myself and learn about their journeys. I talked to attorneys from diverse backgrounds and seniority levels within the organization. It was inspiring to hear about their path through this work and how they navigated it. I also appreciated learning more about the team culture – namely how the senior attorneys have been at the ACLU of Texas for around a decade which allows for more stability and institutional memory. Most of all, I loved discussing the current state of civil rights litigation with them and hearing their wisdom.

I also received more assignments that span a wide range of issues, from free speech and immigration to criminal justice reform. I am excited to continue working on these assignments, as I know the work that the team is doing will help the most vulnerable Texans.

Update 3: This past couple of weeks have been fulfilling yet intense. After completing my first long-term assignment, I dived headfirst into several more covering different issue areas. I was able to help draft a motion to dismiss, I submitted a co-written memo about criminal justice, and I am doing research on freedom of speech at universities and anti-expression bills in Southern states. This work has been exciting and intellectually rigorous. I have learned a lot about civil and appellate procedures. I received helpful feedback for my legal writing. And I am grateful that I can dabble in several different issues for different attorneys.

In addition, this week has been intense emotionally. This week, an ICE agent shot and killed a husband and father while he was on his way to work. It was horrible to hear about and is a reminder of the stakes of this work. Seeing my team respond to this tragedy with heart, thoughtfulness, and strategy was an inspiring experience and one that I will learn from in my own professional journey. Ultimately, I am grateful for these past few weeks and all that I have been able to do and witness.

Update 4: These past two weeks have continued to expose me to a variety of issue areas and modes of legal advocacy. I have also gotten to work on urgent, high-stakes issues. Since my last update, I have worked on and submitted assignments about academic freedom in colleges and universities, immigration, and civil and criminal procedure. I got to present at multiple team meetings about my assignments and independent research.

One of the highlights of this past two weeks was working on an urgent assignment for a high-stakes issue that the ACLU of Texas has recently taken on. I was required to do research on an issue that I was quite unfamiliar with and submit a memo in a day. I then did another assignment based on that memo that will aid in the legal team's evidence-gathering. I was grateful to support, even if just a little bit, on an issue that will have such a wide impact.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

As my internship comes to a close, I am hoping to circle back with attorneys to further solidify relationships. I also want to make sure that I incorporate feedback for my writing samples. Lastly, I want to make sure that I leave a positive impact.

Final Reflection: This summer at the ACLU of Texas truly was a meaningful, transformative experience. Over the past several weeks I was able to contribute to important work, improve my professional skills, and make valuable connections.

This was quite an eventful summer in Texas. From ICE killing community members, to the Governor pressuring cities to increase cooperation with ICE, there were many attacks on the most vulnerable communities in the state. It was an honor to work for the ACLU of Texas in the midst of this. I drafted legal memos about ICE administrative warrants, criminal arrest and search warrants, academic freedom jurisprudence, and free-speech legislation, and then presented my findings to our team and coalition partners. I also helped draft legal documents like Public Information Act requests and a motion to dismiss, strengthening my understanding of civil and appellate procedures while executing a task under an urgent deadline. Additionally, I was humbled to support the attorneys working on the tragic, high-profile matter of Mr. Lorenzo Salgado Araujo: conducting research about authenticating video evidence, drafting a brief declaration template, and taking notes for team meetings. Each of these issues was quite sensitive, and much of my experience in addition to submitting work products, consisted of observing how the legal team and organization at large responded to crisis situations. I was grateful to be in a space where the team led with compassion and thoughtfulness.

In addition to the interesting and meaningful work, I got to hone concrete skills. While working on my writing sample this summer, I got helpful and constructive feedback which I will employ in the future to make my work product better. Particularly, through this assignment I was exposed to other sources and how to cite them using bluebook guidelines while ensuring the final product was readable. I also got a lot of experience with drafting memos and other legal documents which helped me get into the practice of it. For each of these assignments, I was required to research a new legal issue that I was not very exposed to, which has increased my knowledge base. In addition, I did several presentations which strengthened my communication and public speaking skills. Overall, these opportunities helped strengthen my skillset as a future civil rights attorney.

Most importantly, I am grateful that I got to connect with and learn from those who are on the frontlines of the fight for justice in Texas and beyond. From the attorneys and executive leadership, to the policy/advocacy team and communications team, I got to make fruitful relationships and gain valuable wisdom from connecting with them. I also enjoyed making memories with my fellow interns, especially as I got to work on joint assignments with them. I am very grateful for this summer internship and all of the blessings that it brought!