



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026 EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: Two weeks into the internship and I already feel impacted by this experience. My short time at the Immigration Clinic so far brings me back to a time in my life when I was working in a children's hospital. Speaking with the detained inmates and fighting for them reminds me of witnessing the children fighting to leave the hospital and return home.

The first week was a lot of shadowing and learning the ropes. We reviewed immigration law terminology, and I began to get a deeper understanding of client advocacy. The transition from classroom learning to direct legal work during the second week has been challenging but rewarding. I have assisted with document preparation for clients seeking asylum. I'm looking forward to the upcoming weeks and everything I'll learn.

Update 2: Now 4 weeks into the internship, I couldn't be happier with my decision to work here. Working at the Rutgers immigration clinic has brought me in contact with other amazing interns. In addition, I am more comfortable with the workload now. I have drafted a voluntary departure motion and compiled evidence to create an effective affidavit to strengthen the client's case. I do legal research on various case laws to assist my attorney in composing her arguments. I do daily intake calls to detained clients to see if we can provide them with legal services. Overall, so far this is a great experience. I get to practice my soft skills, improve my legal research and writing skills.

Update 3: Unfortunately, on this update I have to reflect on the ugly side of civil work. Yesterday, a client got their voluntary departure request denied and he was ordered deported. He just had a baby with his wife, but he was not able to be there for them. He had to watch on zoom from the detention center. The judge denied his request citing a mistake he made 2 years ago, that he and his wife have moved on from. He would like to appeal this decision, and I sent out a notice to appeal to the judge today. He still wants to fight to stay in this country and we



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will, but I must admit it is a bit disheartening to lose this case. When you are constantly in contact with people you build a connection with them. I look forward to continuing the fight for this client and many others in my upcoming weeks at the Immigration Clinic.

Update 4: Every day, I find myself increasingly grateful for this opportunity. Most recently, I've worked with my fellow intern on representing a voluntary departure request for a client. We filed a Motion for Law Student Appearance document. This is a big step in my legal career. I am receiving the opportunity to represent a client in court as an intern. I'm nervous, but excited at the same time. This is a step above the practice that took place during the school year. This is why I took this internship. For a chance to practice and to begin making a difference in people's lives.

Final Reflection: It's difficult to sum up this experience in just a paragraph. This journey was not without its challenges. About 2 weeks into the internship, I suffered an injury to my left foot. For a couple of weeks, I was in a walking boot until I had to have surgery in the middle of July. However, my supervising lawyers worked with me and we were able to come to a solution. I worked remotely for a week after the surgery and returned to the office afterwards. I was very nervous leading up to the surgery and I'm grateful to the team for working with me. Their compassion and flexibility lifted an enormous weight on my shoulders. I cannot thank them enough.

This internship connected me with someone from my school whom I had never met before! I also developed relationships with all the other student interns, and I left with a bigger network of future colleagues.

Even though my in-office experience was cut short, I still was able to partake meaningfully in the internship. At the beginning of the internship, my supervising attorney told us that the current situation of immigration law is bleak. Most judges are denying any sort of relief to detainees because of the current political climate. Nonetheless, I still got to be a part of a victory. A client was granted voluntary departure; therefore, he did not face deportation and an additional 10 year bar of reentry into the United States. In addition, I had client calls with detainees in Elizabeth Detention Center and their family members. One moment that stuck with me was a detainee crying on the phone about how much he missed his kids and that they were too young to understand what had happened to him. This moment touched me and encouraged me to do all I could do to help him fight.

This experience provided me with the opportunity to gain the hands-on legal experience I have been searching for. I developed my legal research skills along with my writing skills. I'm going into my 2L year of law school with this wonderful opportunity in my rearview and I'm looking forward to applying the skills I developed into my future endeavors. This internship was a very rewarding experience.