



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: Thus far I've had the opportunity to dive right into several immigration related cases arising out of Operations Midway Blitz and Metro Surge in the Midwest. I've met with clients, conducted interviews, and drafted research memos on litigation issues. Notably, I've gotten to work with Aliyah Rahman, a disabled Minneapolis resident who was forcibly dragged from her vehicle as part of Operation Metro Surge. Aliyah is now bringing a Federal Tort Claims Act claim against DHS for their unlawful use of force. FTCA claims are one of the few remaining avenues available for suing the federal government and are an increasingly relevant tool in light of ICE's widespread mobilization in the Midwest and elsewhere in the last year. Given the complexity of bringing FTCA claims and the potential coexisting immigration concerns in these cases, it is critical that there are legal aid lawyers willing and able to represent plaintiffs in these cases, both to provide relief and to potentially deter future harm.

Update 2: Over the last two weeks I've gotten to interview clients in immigration detention and conduct a site visit to ensure settlement compliance. I've been able to see behind the scenes into the early stages of developing litigation as well as what goes on post-settlement, which has been very enlightening. I also attended a training session on the Federal Tort Claims Act, which covered best practices for filling these claims as well as creative strategies of torts available under state law. I've really appreciated the opportunity to learn about these different strategies of federal litigation, and I feel these lessons will prepare me for my work post-graduation.

Update 3: Over the past two weeks I've gotten to dive in to issues of solitary confinement, which is a cause I really care about. I've reviewed client prison files and communications, and done some research on the elements of the claims we're bringing. I'm also helping draft the complaint for this case, which has been very enlightening. I've read many complaints at this



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point, but never really thought about how to structure pleadings or what information to include, so I appreciate the opportunity to substantially contribute to one. This work really solidified my interest in working on issues of prolonged solitary confinement and prisoners' rights issues in general.

Update 4: Over the last two weeks I have worked more extensively on parole issues. I have viewed parole revocation hearings, parole board proceedings, and read parole applications and decisions. Now, I am drafting a writ of habeas for an individual who was denied parole. This work has been deeply fulfilling because parole presents an opportunity to actually get someone out of prison—a rare chance to see the impact our work has on someone's life. This has made me more curious and interested in parole more broadly, and I have pitched some post-graduation fellowship project ideas around the concept of parole justice. I am glad to have the opportunity to broaden my areas of interest and gain new experiences through this internship.

Final Reflection: My summer internship experience allowed me to solidify my interest in and commitment to civil rights litigation. I had the opportunity to dive more deeply into a prison litigation case related to solitary confinement, which is an area I have experience in already, as well as to broaden my experiences by taking on tort claim issues through a Federal Tort Litigation Act case. The chance to diversify my professional experiences and be so deeply integrated into an active civil rights practice was invaluable to me personally and professionally, and I would not have been able to do this work without the support of Equal Justice America. I intend to continue pursuing civil rights work based on my experiences this summer and will be applying for positions with prisoner rights and/or disability rights organizations.