



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ)

Update 1: I am excited to be working at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice this summer with the support of Equal Justice America. NCLEJ advances economic, racial, and disability justice for low-income individuals, families, and communities across the country.

As part of my fellowship, I will be sharing several updates about my work this summer. In my first few weeks, I have been able to hit the ground running, working with NCLEJ attorneys and partner organizations on active litigation to protect access to critical safety-net benefits, including Medicaid, childcare subsidies, and unemployment insurance. I have also contributed to the development of new cases responding to ongoing threats to public benefits on the state and federal levels. My current legal research project centers around due process protections in benefit terminations. Individuals and families who rely on safety-net benefits can be left in crisis when those benefits are terminated or reduced without legally required notice and an opportunity to challenge the termination.

Update 2: I am now well into my summer at NCLEJ! As part of their internship program, NCLEJ attorneys meet with interns each week for a "coffee chat" to discuss their career paths and current work. Last week, we had the opportunity to learn about NCLEJ's work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Fair Food Program. It was inspiring to hear about the worker-driven social responsibility model and the remarkable successes the FFP has had in combating wage theft, dangerous working conditions, and other abuses against farmworkers by creating binding agreements between the CIW and large produce buyers. At a time of continued attacks on low-wage immigrant workers and worker organizing more broadly, it was especially encouraging to learn more about this innovative legal and organizing strategy that is continuing to empower farmworkers across the country. You can learn more about the Coalition of Immokalee Workers here: <https://ciw-online.org/>



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Update 3: Over the last few weeks, I have had the opportunity to work on one of NCLEJ's disability justice cases challenging the Illinois Department of Corrections' failure to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities under the department's supervision. Nearly 40 percent of people in state prisons report having a disability. People with disabilities are not only more likely to come into contact with law enforcement, but prisons and jails are particularly ill equipped to provide necessary accommodations.

While working as a housing advocate, I saw first-hand how the failure to provide accessible housing forced low-income people with disabilities into the shelter system or into contact with the criminal legal system, where the lack of accommodations exacerbated their underlying conditions and caused irreparable harm. It has been deeply meaningful to work on litigation aimed at addressing these systemic failures.

Update 4: Exciting news from NCLEJ this week. Along with partner organizations, we filed a lawsuit against the Department of Health and Human Services for failing to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request seeking information about the Trump administration's unprecedented restrictions on federal childcare and family assistance.

I've had the chance to support NCLEJ's attorneys on this case and participate in co-counsel meetings. It's been fascinating to learn more about FOIA litigation, a critical tool for holding federal agencies accountable and, in this case, for uncovering information about the current administration's attacks on low-income families.

Final Reflection: I had a fantastic experience as an Equal Justice America fellow at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) this summer. NCLEJ advocates for racial, economic, and disability justice for low-income individuals, families, and communities. I was lucky to work across NCLEJ's practice areas, including on litigation to protect New York State home care workers, to challenge the Illinois Department of Corrections' treatment of individuals with disabilities, and to safeguard Medicaid access in Tennessee. I was deeply impressed by how NCLEJ manages to do an incredible amount of important and urgent work despite its small team. It was an honor to learn from such a talented group of lawyers and advocates.

One of the most meaningful experiences I had was speaking to a former Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipient about the role that TANF benefits played in her life, allowing her to care for her grandchildren after she suffered a debilitating injury at work. Her words reminded me how much is at stake when we threaten access to already insufficient social safety net programs.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Over the course of the summer, I conducted legal research on topics ranging from Sixth Circuit due process jurisprudence, to state FOIL procedures and the Federal Tort Claims Act, produced several formal memos, participated in co-counsel meetings, and drafted declarations for an emergency filing. I am grateful for the valuable feedback I received from NCLEJ's attorneys through the summer. I also learned a lot from in-depth trainings led by NCLEJ staff on legal research, brief writing, § 1983 litigation, and trauma-informed lawyering.

The work that I have done this summer has left me far more confident in my legal research and writing skills, and with a much better sense of the type of lawyer I want to be--one who fights hard to make sure everyone has what they need to thrive not only survive.