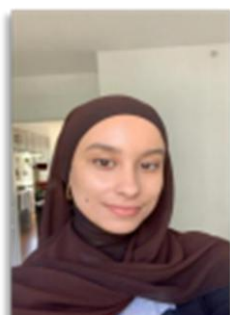




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: The beginning of my legal internship with Free Migration Project has been incredibly fulfilling. I have primarily spent my time engaging in forward thinking legal research that aids the broader challenge against hefty and coercive civil fines delt by noncitizens in removal proceedings. Moreover, on individual client casework, I have spent most time in the world of U Visas and asylum petitions. Seeing the avenues people could once take to protect themselves and the lives they have established in this country after experiencing violence and human rights abuses, becoming threatened by the current administration, is difficult but motivating. I am grateful and elated to be contributing and learning from our immigrant community here in Philadelphia.

Update 2: This week I am back at work after taking some time off. I have the opportunity to work completely independently as my coworkers have also taken some time to spend with family and enjoy the summertime this week. I expect it to be a challenge to problem solve without the usual informed and lived experiences to aid me, but I welcome it. This type of independence often reflects the way the legal profession translates post-graduation, and I am grateful to have this solo working week!

I return to my work with a pending U Visa petition who is seeking relief from removal proceedings, during a turbulent time where such moves are under attack, despite the inherent nature of the U Visa as relief in the first place. I am amazed how in the legal field, there is not just one answer to put forward. Rather, we must implement multiple arguments in our toolbox at once, often creatively, hoping at least one or more lands for our client but in a way where they all complement each other. Beyond this case, I will transition to asylum matters for another client. I am looking forward to doing research with an international perspective, as is



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often required in petitioning asylum arguments. International and comparative law were my main interests entering law school and I am so excited to get a taste of the field in practice and seeing how it intersects with immigration law.

Update 3: Between this update and last, I am still working on various asylum cases and appreciating that it allows me to engage in research with an international perspective. Having taken international law last semester, it is familiar and exciting to be revisiting some international law concepts while working locally. It is always a great reminder to see how law intersects across practice areas and as future attorneys, understanding we may not need to hyper fixate and nail down only one practice area we would like to accomplish post-graduation.

Through my position, I have been given the opportunity to engage in community and political organizing, beyond but related to law. One example has been bridging a student organization I am a part of and my host organization. After hosting and facilitating initial meetings this past week, I am happy to say the connection I am building with my host organization will transfer to well beyond the summer. Our next steps include planning a teach-in at my university to engage other students interested in progressive immigration law concepts and initiatives.

Update 4: This past week and onwards I have transitioned back from client briefs to legal research and memo writing. Again, I have the opportunity to engage in new legal inquiries that are pressingly relevant but not widespread in scholarships yet. This includes the question of remedy for victims of hospitals initiating medical deportations as private entities without the involvement of the federal government. I had to research the question under a tort theory, but in turn received a lot of exposure from a couple of other scholars' perspectives in what they believed was the best solution and how other areas of law could supplement. This came with challenges, as I was working around only two existing cases for precedent that were quite fact specific. However, I was creative in my analysis and used those cases, despite being decided a certain way, to show how the door could be open for clients in other ways. I am nearing the end of my experience this summer, and I am excited to see what the last two weeks entail!

Final Reflection: My summer fellowship journey was extremely rewarding. Before starting this past May, I never immersed myself in legal scholarship and practice to this extent before. What stood out between this role and the legal internships or assistant roles of my past, was the more intimate engagement with a client caseload and the novelty of the research. I had never met clients or got to know the ins and outs of their personal circumstances. I had never investigated a legal topic that was not already directly linked to coursework or had been analyzed already by generations of researchers and attorneys. To be able to have these first experiences, seemingly simple and common in the legal field, was nonetheless deeply meaningful for me.



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The particular research I had accomplished was first on the question of civil fines prescribed by the INA against those who fail to deport. As part of a nationwide class action effort, my host organization tasked me with looking into the intricacies of debt collection conducted by federal agencies with and without the Treasury Department's involvement and the validity of such operations. Doing so, provided for template materials for attorneys all over the country to help their clients appeal egregious civil fines sent as part of the broader attacks on migrants we are continuously seeing.

Another topic was the novel question of medical deportations conducted by hospitals, in which immigrant and uninsured patients are sent back to their country of origins upon reaching a stabilizing condition. This practice carries immense risks, as these individuals may not achieve the necessary treatment they would otherwise receive in the United States nor does this repatriation often happen consensually. That said, I investigated a wide array of tort theories for people to potentially take to court should they experience this. I also found out my city, Philadelphia, is the first and only city to create a public ordinance against medical repatriations thanks to the work of my host organization and other local law students.

My proudest accomplishment though, was creating long-lasting connections with my supervisors, their organization, and learning how to be a better organizer. As a student organizer and organization leader, I discovered my colleagues and I have common ground and goals for how we see the legal profession operating not only now in these turbulent times but forever. We have come together with some other fellow students to plan educational programming on community lawyering within the immigration law context. We even had to pivot together this past week to help a community member with a deportation defense campaign that has gone public which has been a spontaneous learning experience. Although this work is stressful at times, it is high impact and necessary, so I am grateful to become better at it as the days go on and alongside the mentorship of my host organization.