



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Madelene Beck
LAW SCHOOL	University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
ORGANIZATION	Maryland Legal Aid

Update 1: My experience in my first month at Maryland Legal Aid has been wonderful. As a summer clerk for the Appellate and Impact Litigation Unit, I have assisted my supervisors by conducting research, engaging in fact discovery, and preparing to file a major complaint targeting unfair eviction practices.

Update 2: This week, I am halfway through my role as an Equal Justice America Fellow with Maryland Legal Aid! As a law clerk in the appellate and impact litigation unit, I have had the opportunity to engage with a wide variety of legal issues, from housing justice to fair employment practices. In addition, I am sharpening my legal research and writing skills by examining the role of federal courts in the post-Trump v. CASA landscape. Most importantly, my time at Maryland Legal Aid has reinforced my belief in the importance of this work. The need for this work is clear: approximately 80% of people living in poverty who need civil legal services are unable to access them. Organizations like Maryland Legal Aid help close the access-to-justice gap by providing those in need with access to civil legal services. I am grateful to the attorneys and staff at Maryland Legal Aid for their mentorship and to Equal Justice America for providing support to public interest law students across the country.

Update 3: I am having a great summer at Maryland Legal Aid! Since my last update, I have done research to support several ongoing cases in the appellate and impact litigation unit. This past week, our unit received news that a federal court ruled in favor of an issue for which we filed an amicus brief.

Update 4: As my time at Maryland Legal Aid is wrapping up, I have continued to provide research support to the appellate and impact litigation staff. Most notably, I have drafted a memo on the future implications of the decision in Trump v. CASA and pondered the effects



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

that this ruling may have on Maryland Legal Aid's efforts to obtain favorable judgments in impact litigation cases filed in federal district court.

Final Reflection: My summer at Maryland Legal Aid was a meaningful experience that reaffirmed my desire to pursue a public interest legal career. As a law clerk in the appellate and impact litigation unit, I gained experience with both the appellate process in general and, more specifically, with the mechanics of impact litigation. Furthermore, I learned how these two areas of legal practices intersect and work together, but also how they differ from one another.

On the appellate side, I was able to observe arguments in the Appellate Court of Maryland and the Supreme Court of Maryland. Moreover, I had the opportunity to virtually attend a hearing at the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts for a matter in which Maryland Legal Aid submitted an Amicus Brief alongside nonprofit legal organizations across the country. Through these experiences, I gained an inside look at the appellate process at both the state and federal level across a variety of legal issues.

Furthermore, the impact litigation team filed a lawsuit this summer challenging a Baltimore County ordinance that treats renters' property as abandoned at the time of eviction, following a recent Fourth Circuit determination that held a similar ordinance in Baltimore City unconstitutional. Although this filing had already been months in the making when I entered my role, I was able to assist the team's efforts by surveying the ordinances in other Maryland counties to gauge the extent of this issue in the state. I additionally provided research and analysis on several upcoming projects.

The most meaningful aspect of my time as an appellate and impact litigation clerk at Maryland Legal Aid is the level of exposure I received to a variety of legal issues. Because Maryland Legal Aid serves a wide population and handles a variety of legal issues, my knowledge grew in several areas of the law: my research ranged from matters of Constitutional Law to local housing laws, from family law to employment law. Although this wide exposure did not help me narrow down what I may wish to focus on in my future career, it solidified my excitement to engage in client-driven public interest work that encourages the wellbeing of my fellow community members.