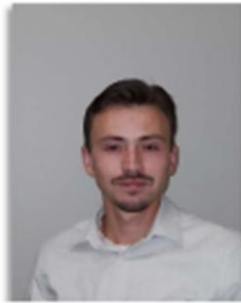




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	Michigan Law Veterans Legal Clinic/Civil Criminal Litigation Clinic

Update 1: So far this summer, I have had the opportunity to work directly with clients on matters ranging from landlord-tenant disputes to a federal case brought under the Visual Artists Rights Act. It has been rewarding to step beyond the doctrinal focus of 1L coursework and apply what I have learned to help real people navigate real legal challenges. Having the opportunity to see firsthand the struggles faced by people who cannot afford legal representation this early in my career is something that will shape how I approach this profession. I am deeply grateful to Equal Justice America for investing in me and other students who have chosen to pursue this work this summer.

Update 2: Since my last update, I have had the opportunity to spend more time speaking in depth with several clients. Taking the time to listen to their experiences and, in one case, seeing those struggles firsthand during a home visit, has been incredibly eye-opening. That home visit in particular reinforced for me that while we have the opportunity to work hard to advocate for and support our client, many of her neighbors facing similar conditions may not have access to the same resources or legal assistance. Seeing that disparity firsthand underscored how meaningful access to legal representation can be. This experience has reaffirmed my belief in the importance of public interest work and highlighted the impact organizations like Equal Justice America can have by supporting students. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to that mission and continue learning from the communities we serve.

Update 3: Since my last update, I had the opportunity to attend a hearing regarding a temporary restraining order that we were seeking to convert into a preliminary injunction. At the hearing, Defendants did not appear, and the Judge ultimately



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decided to schedule an evidentiary hearing instead. While the outcome was more favorable than unfavorable for our client, one aspect of the experience stayed with me. Our client and her two children traveled by bus for more than an hour through extreme heat to attend the hearing. Despite the effort required for them to be there, our time before the Judge lasted less than five minutes. The hearing that our client had prepared for and traveled to attend effectively did not take place. This experience reinforced for me the challenges that the justice system can create for ordinary people. Even necessary legal procedures can require significant time and effort from clients, particularly those already facing difficult circumstances. It was a reminder of the importance of considering the practical realities clients face when navigating the legal system.

Update 4: Since my last update, I have continued working through discovery in one of our federal cases involving the destruction of artwork during the demolition of a building. As part of that process, I had the opportunity to meet with our client in person at his business in Detroit to discuss the artwork that was destroyed. Speaking with our client about the significance of the artwork allowed me to better understand the importance of the case beyond the monetary damages at issue. While it is easy to become focused on legal arguments, the conversation reminded me that our clients often carry losses that extend beyond what a court can remedy.

Final Reflection: Legal cases are often long. Because of this, in many of the cases I worked on this summer, I had the opportunity to take part in only a snapshot of the legal issues my clients were dealing with. In a similar way, I also only saw a snapshot of their lives. When thinking about public interest legal work in the abstract, I think it can be easy to group clients together as though they are essentially the same: people who need legal assistance and cannot afford to obtain it on their own. The reality is that every client has a unique path that has led them to the point where they need that help. Being able to put face to the people behind the legal problems, and to get to know them even for a small portion of their lives, was one of the most eye-opening parts of my summer. It reaffirmed for me the human side of this work and the importance of having open-minded advocates who are willing to go the extra mile for their clients.

One of the cases that will stick with me the most involved a cockroach- and mold-infested townhome that our client and her family rented. Throughout the summer, we worked to obtain an emergency TRO, and my internship culminated in a hearing before a circuit court judge where we argued to convert the TRO into a preliminary injunction. In the end, we achieved what we had hoped for: our client and her three



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young children were able to leave the townhome, and the conditions were being remediated. Having a legal victory like this was, of course, deeply rewarding. Yet, once again, it was the human side of the case that meant the most to me.

Throughout our meetings with the client, I had the opportunity to speak with her and hear what her children thought about what was happening. I could sense the gratitude that both she and her children had for the work we were doing. Being only 24 years old, with my own childhood still feeling relatively recent, the realization that the work I was doing could give those children some measure of hope is something I still struggle to fully comprehend. It made the responsibility of being an advocate feel much more tangible than it ever had in a classroom.

I came into this summer wanting to experience public interest work, but I had never worked closely with people who were relying on me to help with a legal problem. Getting to know my clients, even for a short time, gave me a much better understanding of the people behind the cases. I was only a small part of their lives, but being able to help, even in a limited way, was meaningful to me. Wherever my career takes me, that is something I hope I remember.