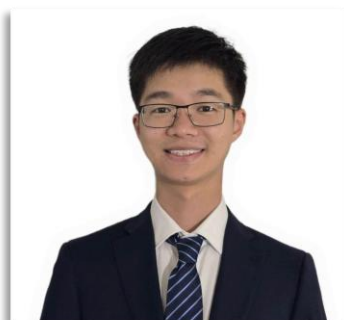




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: After almost four weeks of my summer clerkship experience with Pathways to Citizenship, I am excited to share my first #EJAFellowUpdate for Equal Justice America. Pathways to Citizenship is a nonprofit located in Solana Beach, CA, dedicated to helping community members who need immigration legal services. The organization focuses primarily on asylum application, habeas corpus, and other family-based immigration matters.

As a summer law clerk, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, interviewing clients and drafting immigration court motions. I have also been deeply inspired by the team at Pathways to Citizenship as well as the volunteer attorneys supporting us, who are closely connected to the local community and always ready to help. This Monday, I attended the organization's monthly volunteer clinic at Interfaith Community Services, another nonprofit serving the indigent and homeless members of the North San Diego community. Through this walk-in clinic, people with urgent needs can access legal support more conveniently, making it easier for them to navigate the complicated judicial and administrative systems and pursue safe and stable lives.

Update 2: I am now halfway through my summer clerkship at Pathways to Citizenship. Over the past month, I have focused on legal research and writing regarding immigration matters, particularly petitions for writs of habeas corpus. This experience has given me deeper insight into the constitutional and statutory protections for immigrants. With the recent decisions by SCOTUS on immigration matters, including *Blanche v. Muk Choi Lau* and *Mullin v. Doe*, the legal landscape in this area continues to evolve rapidly. I am grateful for the opportunity to stay informed about these developments and contribute through my work in any way I can.



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Update 3: In early June, travel restrictions affecting 39 countries were lifted. Since then, I have seen and worked with clients whose cases had been paused for long periods could finally move forward. It has been striking to witness how a single change in the legal landscape can have such a profound impact on people's lives. Meantime, I am grateful to be part of Pathways to Citizenship to help people pursue the lives that they have worked toward.

Update 4: Having spent six years in academia, this summer at Pathways is my first "real job." I've been asked many times why I switched to a career in law, and my answer often includes the word "tangible." It wasn't until this summer that I truly understood what that word means and why it was the reason I chose such a different path. When I work on habeas petitions, finishing my work one day earlier can mean one less day of unjust detention for a vulnerable person. It's the most tangible difference I've ever made making someone suffer a little less in a world that is inevitably imperfect. That is also what gets a procrastinating night owl out of bed every morning.

Final Reflection: I had an unforgettable experience at Pathways to Citizenship this summer. Our organization provides both affirmative and defensive immigration services, mostly pro bono, to clients.

For affirmative applications, we mostly focused on family-based cases. Our clients' goals are often very simple: they want to live with their families and enjoy the basic rights to work and travel. In pursuing this goal, their two major obstacles are bureaucracy and the unaffordable cost of legal service. When communicating with these clients, it was often deeply rewarding to be able to offer pro bono or affordable help and share the joy of a better life with them.

In less common but more challenging cases, some clients are in court proceedings seeking legal status to remain in this country. For these clients, we need to both find a future pathway to citizenship and also fight for their rights in the moment. I spent most of this summer working on habeas corpus petitions, which is one path toward that latter goal.

This kind of district court petition is relatively new to the field of immigration law. Before 2025, a typical immigration attorney might have filed such a petition once every several years, or even once a decade. The landscape has changed dramatically since then. Immigrants with the simple wish of living a stable life, some even have already been living in this country for years, are now frequently detained without adequate procedural safeguards. Because of this, I didn't just learn about habeas petitions this summer but witnessed how the legal field is adapting in real time to this new reality. We collaborated with many other attorneys, learning from their experience with these proceedings and, in turn, helping other attorneys facing similar scenarios. Seeing the



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products like the platform of “habeas dockets,” I find the power of this community helping each other impressive in how they can find solutions to new challenges.

There were ups and downs in our work, but nothing was more rewarding than seeing clients, whose stories I had come to know intimately through court records and their own declarations, secure the freedom. Because habeas corpus proceedings are highly time-sensitive, timeliness was usually our top priority. Filing petition after petition at a fast pace, I could clearly see my understanding of the law improving with each one. This cycle of honing my own skills while bringing real change to clients’ lives became a positive feedback loop that made my summer even more rewarding.

This summer affected me both personally and professionally, largely through watching my coworkers at Pathways. Without monetary reward, their only motivation is to help the people they meet secure the rights they deserve. That makes the joy of seeing progress feel especially real. With this mindset, even when things don't go smoothly, knowing that we are doing our best and that every minute we spend is meaningful makes me more determined to dedicate myself to this work. Looking ahead to my future career choice, I will certainly give more weight to how closely the work aligns with my values.