



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT

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ORGANIZATION	Open Door Legal

Update 1: I'm excited to share that I've started my Equal Justice America fellowship this summer. I will be working with Open Door Legal on the Probate Team. I'm so grateful to Equal Justice America for making this opportunity possible through this summer fellowship, as most legal internships are unpaid. If you believe everyone has the right to critical legal services, including those who can't afford them, I hope you'll consider donating to support me AND this important work!

Update 2: I have been having a great time at Open Door Legal so far. I have been able to meet new clients, share the importance of certain decisions that go into establishing their estate plan, and supporting them in making these decisions. It has been really rewarding. Being conflicted about what I wanted to work on in the future has been really stressful but getting exposed to a new area of law and this experience (because of EJA) has been really helpful. It is so lovely to be able to see clients' cases through and be a part of their signing day.

Update 3: Since starting on Open Door Legal's probate and estate planning team, I've learned a lot while also partaking in real client work. I have handled trust administration matters (real property title transfers, coordinating with the SF Assessor-Recorder's Office, and keeping BOE filing deadlines, and distribution timelines), prepping closing documents and letters for estate planning signings, and drafting probate petitions (Spousal Property, Heggstad, small-estate). I have gotten so much feedback from the paralegal and attorneys on my team which has truly helped my growth as a writer and as a future lawyer! I am very grateful for this opportunity and for the experience.

Update 4: Being part of Open Door Legal's probate team has given me the opportunity to work directly with clients as they make important decisions about their estate plans. Helping elder



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clients make decisions such as who they want to name as beneficiaries, how they want their property distributed, and who they trust to carry out their wishes has been incredibly meaningful. Explaining why these decisions matter and walking clients through what each choice means for their families in the future is a really special part of this job. The fact that clients trust me with this part of their life is a huge responsibility and one that I don't take lightly. I am grateful to be a part of that process and to help make it feel a little less overwhelming for them.

Final Reflection: This summer with Open Door Legal was the best professional experience I have had -- it genuinely changed how I think about practicing law. I worked as a paralegal on probate and trust administration. I was able to see so many things like working with successor trustees, preparing affidavits of death of trustee, learning how to navigate the SF Assessor-Recorder's office, drafting spousal property petitions and Heggstad petitions, conservatorships, and preparing and closing full estate planning packages. I even worked on a matter involving a California trust holding property in two Louisiana parishes, which meant learning where California law stopped applying and local counsel needed to step in.

I was able to do much more than observe -- I did real work for real clients, under supervision from our team paralegal and managing attorney. I learned quickly that in this kind of law, precision and care are at the root of what we do. ODL's whole model is built around that understanding: meeting people where they are, and making sure legal help doesn't just exist on paper but is actually accessible.

I am leaving this summer with concrete skills in trust administration and probate procedure, but more than that, a much clearer sense of the kind of lawyer I want to be. I'm extremely grateful to Equal Justice America for the funding that made this summer possible, and to ODL for showing me what this work looks like.