



## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Cruz Rodriguez

**Law School:** Loyola University Chicago School of Law

**Organization:** American Bar Association ProBAR

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### Update 1:

It's been two weeks since I've started my internship at ProBAR! So far, I've learned so much about immigration law and the representation of unaccompanied minors. I've learned about the different forms of immigration relief that are available to unaccompanied minors, such as asylum, withholding from removal, Special Juvenile Immigrant Status, and T & U visas. I am excited to continue learning about this area of the law and advocating for our clients.

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### Update 2:

I've had the awesome opportunity to move down to Harlingen, TX for the remaining portion of my internship with the American Bar Association ProBAR. While logistics are still being sorted out as to what I can do, I am looking forward to advocating for clients in court and in the community. Definitely a change of lifestyle at the border!

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### Update 3:

Last week I was able to attend my first immigration court hearing for several of our clients. I learned about the process of the court hearings, as well as how attorneys prepare for them. It was a bit strange to be back in a setting like that during the pandemic, but I'm happy to see that it can be done safely.

Tomorrow I am going down to the U.S. border to help people who are being processed into the United States after the Trump administration's anti-immigrant MPP program. There is still a refugee crisis at the border! We need our immigration laws to change so that more people have the ability to safely enter the United States. We also need attorneys and law students to dedicate some time to learn about immigration law and help out some of the refugees at the border pro bono. Even if it's not your area of practice, your representation and knowledge can make a huge difference in someone's life!



**Entry 4:**

I am wrapping up my internship here in Harlingen, TX with the American Bar Association ProBAR. I've had an amazing experience here learning about child immigration law. I am very excited to take these skills and provide pro bono immigration services in the future after graduation and admission to the bar.

I have learned of the importance of providing pro bono legal services to this vulnerable group of refugees. Every child deserves legal representation. Even if you as a professional have determined they do not have immigration relief. The important thing is letting them know you are there to do the best you can, you are listening to their story, and you are there to hold their hand until the end.

Today I went hearing, but rather than sit in the courtroom, I sat in a parking lot with a parent who was too afraid to step into the courtroom with their child. She ended up dozing off, which reminded me of the comfort and security we can provide as advocates. Sometimes this is all we need to do, while our other colleagues are advocating in the courtroom.