Samira Khoury - Yale Law School J.D. application (2026-27 cycle, entering fall 2027)

Detroit, MI · samira.khoury.test@example.com · LSAC No. L00000000 (sample) · Fictional applicant for the MyRound Yale Law sample

Samira, her employers and everyone named here are invented for this sample. Universities are real; nothing here describes real people or real cases.

At a glance

- **LSAT:** 174 (August 2026, one sitting). LSAT Argumentative Writing sample completed September 2026.
- **Undergraduate GPA (LSAC):** 3.93
- **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor - B.A., Public Policy (Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy), minor in Arabic Studies, May 2022. Highest Honors in Public Policy.
- **Work since college:** four years full-time (legal aid paralegal, then court-access program analyst).
- **Languages:** English (native), Arabic (Levantine, native at home; Modern Standard Arabic, professional).
- **Submitted:** October 20, 2026.

Resume

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EXPERIENCE

Michigan Court Access Project (nonprofit partner to Michigan district courts' self-help centers), Detroit, MI *Program Analyst*, August 2024 - present - Run the data and forms work for self-help centers in four district courts that serve about 9,000 visitors a year, most without a lawyer, in landlord-tenant, small claims and debt cases. - Rewrote 14 court-approved instruction sheets in plain language with the courts' staff attorneys; tested drafts with 60 visitors; the answer form's "incomplete filing" rate in the pilot court fell from 31% to 18% over six months. - Led a review of 40 machine-translated Arabic versions of court forms and instructions that a vendor had produced with an AI translation tool. With two certified court interpreters, found meaning-changing errors in 9 of the 40 (including one that turned "you may request a hearing" into "you must attend a hearing"). Wrote the review checklist the project now requires before any translated form is posted. - Built a monthly dashboard (SQL, Tableau) of visitor questions and outcomes used by the four court administrators.

Riverside Immigrant Justice Center (nonprofit legal services), Detroit, MI *Paralegal and Arabic Interpreter*, August 2022 - July 2024 - Supported three staff attorneys on asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and U-visa cases; carried a caseload of about 45 open matters at a time. - Interviewed clients in Arabic and English and drafted first versions of more than 60 client declarations; organized

country-conditions evidence; prepared filings for immigration court and USCIS. - Interpreted for attorneys in client meetings (not in court); trained four volunteers in intake. - Created a bilingual "what happens at your hearing" guide used in the Center's weekly orientation.

University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, MI *Student Assistant, Circulation and Stacks*, September 2018 - May 2022 (15 hours/week, paid)

EDUCATION

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI - B.A., Public Policy, minor in Arabic Studies, May 2022. GPA 3.93. - Highest Honors. Senior honors thesis: *"Who Shows Up: Tenant Appearance in Eviction Cases in One Michigan District Court Before and After a Diversion Program."* Advisor: a Ford School faculty member. - James B. Angell Scholar (2019, 2020, 2021). - Research assistant, Ford School housing policy research group (2021-2022): coded 1,200 court docket entries.

ACTIVITIES - Volunteer, Washtenaw tenant helpline (2020-2022): 4 hours/week answering calls; referred callers to legal aid. - Tutor, an Arabic-language homework club for elementary students in Dearborn (2017-2022, summers and weekends). - Copy editor, a student policy journal (2020-2022).

SKILLS AND INTERESTS SQL, R, Tableau, Spanish (intermediate). Long-distance running (two half marathons); I bake the Lebanese breads my grandmother taught me and am still bad at ka'ak.

Personal statement

My grandmother's first lawyer was me. I was eleven, she had a letter from the Social Security Administration, and nobody else in the house could read it fast enough to call before the office closed. I read it aloud in English, then again in Arabic, then a third time in the Arabic I thought she would understand, the one without the word "overpayment" in it. She nodded through all three. On the phone, I told the woman at the office that my grandmother did not owe them anything. That was not what the letter said. It was what I hoped it said.

I have thought about that phone call for a long time, because it is the most honest picture I have of how the law reaches most people: through someone in the middle, translating, and hoping.

After college I went to work at the Riverside Immigrant Justice Center in Detroit as a paralegal and Arabic interpreter. Much of my job was sitting with clients for hours and turning what they told me into a declaration, the sworn story an asylum case rests on. In my first month I drafted a declaration for a man from Syria who said a neighbor had "warned" him to leave his street. In Arabic the word he used could mean a warning or a threat, and in English that difference can decide a case. I did not know which one he meant, so I asked him to tell me what the neighbor said, word for word, and what he did the next morning. He had left before dawn with his children. The attorney and I rewrote the paragraph around what he did, not around my translation of what he felt. I learned that in law the exact word matters, and that when you are not sure of the word, you go back to the facts.

I also learned the limits of my role. I could find the facts and the words, but I could not argue for them. I watched the attorneys I worked for take a declaration I had drafted and build a legal theory around it that I had not seen. I wanted to be able to do that part.

Two years ago I moved to the Michigan Court Access Project, which works with district courts on the self-help centers where tenants and debtors come without lawyers. Here the translator in the middle is often a form. Most people in an eviction case in Michigan never see a lawyer; they see a two-page answer form and a deadline. I spend my days on those forms: rewriting instructions in plain language, testing them with the people who use them, and counting what goes wrong. When a vendor delivered forty Arabic translations produced with an AI tool, my job was to check them with two court interpreters. Most were good. Nine changed the meaning, and one told a tenant she "must" attend a hearing she actually had the right to request. The tool was fast; it was not careful. Neither, at eleven, was I.

What these jobs have in common is that I keep standing at the point where a person meets the legal system, and I keep seeing that the outcome depends on who explained the rules and how well. I want to go to law school to work on the rules themselves: how civil courts communicate with people who come without lawyers, what due process requires when a notice is in a language the person cannot read, and who is responsible when the explanation is wrong. I expect to start in civil legal aid, and I would like to work eventually on court reform at the state level, where most of these rules are written.

I am applying now because four years of work have given me specific questions I cannot answer without legal training. I know how to sit with a client, read a docket and test a form. I do not yet know how to argue that a notice violated someone's rights. I want to learn that, carefully, from people who have thought about it longer than I have.

My grandmother, for the record, did owe them the money. We paid it back over a year, forty dollars a month. She never blamed me. I still think she deserved a letter she could read.

250-word essay

A form is a promise. When a court hands a tenant an answer form, it promises that the form says what the law says. That promise is easy to keep in English and hard to keep in translation. In my current job I helped review forty Arabic court forms produced with an AI translation tool. Most were accurate. Nine were not, and the errors weren't random: they clustered in modal verbs and deadlines, where "may" becomes "must" and "within" becomes "by." Those are exactly the words a person without a lawyer relies on.

The question I keep returning to is who owns that error. The court approved the English form. The vendor ran the tool. The tenant signed. Courts are adopting machine translation because the alternative is often no translation at all, and that is a reasonable choice. But a reasonable tool still needs a rule about accountability: a standard for review, a way to flag an error, and a remedy when a translated instruction misleads someone into missing a deadline.

I am interested in whether existing doctrine can carry that weight. Notice cases ask whether a notice was "reasonably calculated" to inform. Language-access rules ask whether help was "meaningful." Neither was written with a translation engine in mind. I would like to study how those standards apply when the translator is software, and whether courts should treat a translated form as the court's own words. I think they should, and that this would change how carefully they are written.

Optional essay 4 (changing your mind)

When the Court Access Project first proposed using an AI tool to translate court forms, I argued against it. I had spent two years watching how much a single word could matter in an asylum declaration, and the idea of a machine choosing those words for people who could not check them seemed reckless to me. I said so in a staff meeting, more sharply than I needed to.

Our director, who disagreed with me, asked me to look at one number before deciding: how many of the forms the four courts used had any Arabic version at all. The answer was six out of more than a hundred. Arabic is the second most common language among the courts' visitors. For most of them, the choice was not between a human translation and a machine translation. It was between a machine translation and nothing.

I did not change my mind all at once. I asked to run the review myself, with two court interpreters, and we found the nine errors I describe in my other essay. The errors confirmed that my worry was real. The other thirty-one forms confirmed that my position was wrong. A careful process could get most of the benefit and catch most of the harm.

What I took from it is that I had been arguing against a tool when I should have been asking about a process. I now start disagreements by asking what the other person sees that I do not. I also apologized to our director for the staff meeting.

Activities

College, non-enrollment periods - Summer 2021: Research assistant, Ford School housing policy research group (paid, 30 hours/week, 10 weeks). Coded eviction docket entries for my thesis and a faculty project. - Summer 2020: Volunteer, Washtenaw tenant helpline (remote, 12 hours/week). - Summer 2019: Cashier, a family-owned bakery in Dearborn (paid, 35 hours/week).

College, during terms 1. Senior honors thesis on tenant appearance in eviction cases (2021-2022, 10 hours/week). 2. Student assistant, University library (2018-2022, 15 hours/week, paid). 3. Volunteer, tenant helpline (2020-2022, 4 hours/week). 4. Copy editor, student policy journal (2020-2022, 3 hours/week).

College, other - Family responsibilities: drove my grandmother to medical appointments and interpreted for her at most of them, 2019-2021, about 5 hours/week, until her death in March 2021.

Post-college 1. Program Analyst, Michigan Court Access Project (Aug 2024 - present, 45 hours/week, paid). 2. Paralegal and Arabic Interpreter, Riverside Immigrant Justice Center (Aug 2022 - Jul 2024, 45 hours/week, paid). 3. Volunteer Arabic interpreter for a free medical clinic in Dearborn (2023 - present, one Saturday a month). 4. Half-marathon training with a Detroit running club (2023 - present).

Addendum: winter 2021 semester

In the winter 2021 semester I withdrew from one course (Intermediate Microeconomics) and earned a B- in Statistics, my lowest grade. My grandmother was in hospice care that semester and died in March. I retook Intermediate Microeconomics the following fall and earned an A.

Letters of recommendation (LSAC Letter of Recommendation Service)

1. My senior thesis advisor, Ford School of Public Policy (faculty).
2. My professor for two years of advanced Arabic, University of Michigan (faculty).
3. The supervising attorney at Riverside Immigrant Justice Center (employer).