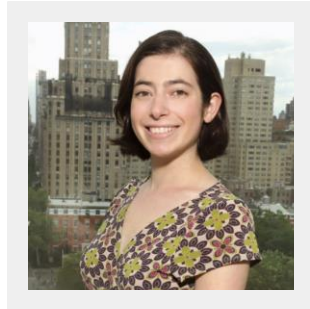




# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Elizabeth Lewis

**Law School:** University of Michigan Law School

**Organization:** Legal Aid Society at Metropolitan Family Services

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### Update 1:

EJA Fellow Update week 3 of my internship Legal Aid Society at Metropolitan Family Services and I will be making my first court appearance today! I'll be helping a DV survivor get a divorce from their abuser. Grateful to be working with such incredible clients. Wish me luck!

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### Update 2:

Time for an EJA Fellow Update! It has been very special to continue to work with DV survivors – this week we are going to trial (!) to get a long-term order of protection. Thanks to Equal Justice America for supporting my work.

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### Update 3:

Time for an EJA Fellow Update! I've been burrowed away working through discovery—which will hopefully (fingers crossed emoji) lead to our client getting the relief she needs for a fresh start. Thank you, Equal Justice America, for your support

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### Update 4:

EJA Fellow Update! I'm reflecting on mentorship in legal aid settings. I've learned SO much from the attorneys Legal Aid Society at Metropolitan Family Services, esp wrt sustainable, quality public service lawyering (spoiler – boundaries required!)

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### Update 5:

I finished up my internship at the Legal Aid Society at Metropolitan Family Services (LAS/MFS) a few weeks ago. Since then, I've been reflecting on what I learned over the summer. A non-exhaustive list:

1. It is absolutely possible to have a long-lasting and fulfilling career in legal aid. Burnout and vicarious trauma



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are real, but a supportive workplace that lives its values makes all the difference. I had the pleasure of working with amazing career legal aid attorneys (and paralegals, and advocates!) who modeled healthy compartmentalization and work-life balance.

2. Wraparound services in legal aid are invaluable to clients. Almost all (and maybe all?) the clients I worked with utilized multiple services provided by LAS/MFS. Sometimes this meant that a client pursuing a divorce also received immigration services, all in-house. Other times this meant that a client uncomfortable with technology could go to an MFS community center to get help accessing a Zoom hearing.

3. Everyone deserves the benefit of the doubt. We all need grace: clients, coworkers, opposing counsels, adverse parties, judges, yourself. Practicing grace makes for efficient lawyering. Perhaps more importantly, it helps create a kinder culture that recognizes the humanity in all players involved in the adversarial system. And at legal aid, we love humanity! Or at least I do!

4. Chicago summers are absolutely worth the hype. I will miss the beautiful lakefront walks and watching the lion cubs at the Lincoln Park Zoo grow up. (They are SO cute. Go see them while you still can.)

And that's a wrap! Excited to finish up 3L at the University of Michigan Law School and get going on the next adventure. Equal Justice America partially funded my internship this summer. If you would like to support their work, you can.