



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1: Hi all! I have a small update and personal request for anyone in my community that is able and interested in donating to an important cause.

This summer I have the opportunity to work as a Legal Intern at Legal Aid Chicago in their Children and Families Practice Group. In my role, I am helping survivors of domestic violence in protective order and family law cases. I came to law school to advocate for children and families. It is exciting to work alongside experienced and passionate attorneys who demonstrate the importance of this work.

I am grateful to be an Equal Justice America Fellow at Legal Aid Chicago. Equal Justice America supports law students pursuing work in public interest law. Their Fellowship Program enables law students to work for legal aid programs and provide critical assistance to low-income clients. I am thrilled to be a part of both organizations. I invite you to read more about EJA and consider making a contribution to support future law students and legal aid organizations.

Update 2: These past few weeks have been filled with exciting work at Legal Aid Chicago! I drafted an amended petition for an order of protection and an affidavit in support of our amended petition. I spoke with numerous clients as we conducted follow-up with clients, I conducted intakes with. I drafted advice letters, began working on a motion to enforce a judgment for a dissolution of marriage and in the alternative a motion to modify the judgment. I am so thrilled to have this opportunity to gain hands on experience and assist Legal Aid Chicago clients seek the appropriate relief. What I enjoy most in my work, however, is using my communication and relationship building skills to effectively and empathetically carry out my client communication responsibilities.

Update 3: This week has been one of the busiest yet! I conducted two intake interviews and lead the case investigation for each. Then after working closely with the potential clients to better understand their case, I had the opportunity to present one of their cases at our internal case acceptance meeting. It was so important to me to clearly communicate with my co-workers and supervisors my client's history and legal assistance that they seek. I felt purposeful working on the case from start at intake to acceptance at CAM. I gained a deeper understanding of the types of follow-up questions it is important to ask clients. Additionally, throughout the



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process my supervisor modeled for me the way to share clients the reason why we are asking particular questions or seeking particular information and the importance of empowering clients with information every step of the way. This week I will observe the client's status hearing. I am hopeful I can continue to assist on the client's case!

Update 4: I have enjoyed splitting my time between assisting clients and attorneys on family law cases and orders of protection cases. My work with the Children and Families Practice Group at Legal Aid Chicago has affirmed my interest in these areas of law. I am so grateful for my supervisors—they share their thought processes with me and help me think critically about complex legal issues and strategies for approaching them. Throughout this summer I have been given great responsibility to do substantive work on cases. This week, I drafted all of the documents necessary for our client to file for divorce. Most significantly, I worked on the client's Petition for Dissolution of Marriage and Petition for Temporary Relief and Support. Meanwhile, I have been tackling a particularly complex assignment for one client throughout the summer—drafting a motion to modify a judgment for dissolution of marriage and an affidavit in support of the motion. I have been researching case law around the issue of when a court will grant a 2-1401 motion on the grounds that the parties entered a marital settlement agreement under a mutual mistake and looking for potential support from our record like the parties' prove-up transcript. I most enjoy speaking with our client and involving her while I work on this motion. It is important to our team and me that we empower clients with information, and I am grateful that the attorneys in Legal Aid Chicago's Children and Families Practice Group model for me this work and involve me so closely in their work.

Update 5: I am so thrilled to share that I will be continuing my internship with Legal Aid Chicago's Children and Families Practice Group this fall! This summer has been such a formative experience, and I am grateful for the opportunity that both Legal Aid Chicago and Equal Justice America offered me to do this important work with families in Chicago and the greater Chicago area who historically do not have access to legal services. In my final weeks at Legal Aid Chicago, I have been assisting in the preparation for an upcoming Stalking No Contact Order hearing. After reading our case file, the Emergency SNCO petition, and affidavit in support of the petition for the SNCO, studying the discovery, reading the SNCO statute, and a research memorandum that my supervisor wrote on a potential issue in the case, I got up to speed. One assignment I worked on included trying to get in contact with potential witnesses before we issued subpoenas. Another assignment I was tasked with was drafting interrogatories and requests to produce. I also drafted a direct examination for a potential witness and helped to modify a part of the direct examination for our client's testimony. I sat in on meetings with our client and saw again through my supervisor's strong client advocacy and communication, the importance of leading with patience and empathy and centering the wishes and best interest of a client throughout the course of a case. In the end, I got to go to the in-person hearing. It was so moving to see the advocacy of my supervisor and the director of our practice group come full circle. I was elated to see my supervisor in action in court! He zealously represented the interests of our client. I believe our client's perseverance and unwavering determination to tell her story and seek justice helped motivate and inform our team's advocacy. Ultimately, I cannot say enough about how positive my experience at Legal Aid Chicago as an Equal Justice America Fellow has been. I felt warmly welcomed by the Children and Families Practice Group. Attorneys and staff made me feel like a valued member of the team. So many entrusted me with the responsibility to work closely with clients and to do substantive work on complex, sensitive, high-priority cases. This summer, I deepened my commitment to public interest work, solidified my interest in continuing to explore family law and domestic violence work, and began to think more expansively about the impact I want to have as a law student and future attorney.