



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:

Name: Miranda Drakes

Law School: Washington University

Organization: Legal Services of Eastern Missouri

Update 1:

After a rigorous first year at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law, I have had the pleasure of joining Legal Services of Eastern Missouri's Housing Law team, where I am spending my summer providing free legal services to individuals facing eviction, loss of housing assistance, poor living conditions, discrimination, and other housing issues. Equal Justice America, an organization that funds the work of law students in legal aid programs across the country, generously selected me as a Summer Fellow!

In my first few weeks at Legal Services of Eastern Missouri I have prepared a motion to void a default judgment. I researched Missouri contract law and due process requirements for service of process and drafted the client's affidavit and motion. Additionally, I wrote a legal opinion explaining the illegality, based on local and constitutional law, of a proposed city ordinance banning the use of tents on public property.

Update 2:

In my first month with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, I have gained invaluable experience in legal research and writing. In addition to drafting two motions to dismiss for unlawful detainer lawsuits and multiple counsel and advice letters, I have been researching the Violence Against Women Act's impact on housing law to assist two survivors of domestic violence in their efforts to rescind their leases.

I look forward to utilizing my sharpened legal research and writing skills when I return to Washington University School of Law this fall as a Staff Editor for the Washington University Journal of Law and Policy. I am grateful to Equal Justice America for funding my summer experience with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri so I can provide such critical legal services to impoverished Missourians.

Update 3:

In the first half of my summer with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, I have gained invaluable experience in legal research and writing. In addition to drafting several motions and letters to clients, I have been researching the Violence Against Women Act's impact on housing law to assist survivors of domestic violence in their efforts to rescind their leases.

I look forward to utilizing my refined legal research and writing skills when I return to @Washington University School of Law this fall as a Staff Editor for the Washington University Journal of Law and Policy.



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Update 4:

As my summer comes to a close, I am feeling very grateful for my experience with @Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. The invaluable legal research and writing skills I have refined this summer will serve me well as I pursue a career in litigation. This past week, I had the opportunity to draft a counsel and advice blog post for Legal Services of Eastern Missouri's website. Many callers reach out to Legal Services of Eastern Missouri due to bad conditions of their dwelling that their landlords refuse to repair. I drafted a one-pager for our website that will direct callers to the steps they should take.

Update 5:

As my summer internship with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri comes to an end, I am in awe of the organization's impact on the community it serves. In my short time at Legal Services, I had the opportunity to help clients retain their Section 8 rental assistance, defend clients in eviction lawsuits, and ensure clients understood their rights as tenants.

When the Housing Authority proposed to terminate one of our client's Section 8 rental assistance, I attended the hearing and advocated for the client to retain her assistance. On the final day of my internship, the Hearing Officer notified me that the Housing Authority would continue to provide rental assistance to the client!

I am grateful to Equal Justice America for funding my summer experience at Legal Services. According to Legal Services Corporation's 2022 Justice Gap Study, 92% of the civil legal needs of Americans living in poverty go unmet. Equal Justice America seeks to narrow this gap by funding the legal aid work of law students like myself. Please consider supporting Equal Justice America.