

**VETERANS' RIGHTS
FELLOWSHIP**

**POST GRADUATE
ANNUAL REPORT**

EQUAL JUSTICE
A M E R I C A



ALEXANDRA HIMONAS
EJA FELLOW

WASHINGTON, DC
SEPTEMBER 2024

**NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL
SERVICES PROGRAM**



I. REFLECTIONS



Alexa Himonas, J.D. 2022
Georgetown University

I have learned so much this year about practicing law and about the veteran community. One of my biggest surprises this year has been what I learned about specific language and phrasing to use when working with veteran clients. For example, I learned that the VA has a very specific definition of veteran. Someone must be federally called to active duty and be discharged under what the VA deems “other than dishonorable conditions for VA purposes” to be considered a veteran by the VA. Because of the VA’s particular definition, I learned that it is sometimes better to ask people “have you ever been in the military?” instead of “are you a veteran?” This way, we are not excluding anyone from our service who we could help, but who might not be considered a veteran by the VA.

I also recently learned that many veterans do not like it when people say “thank you for your service.” I learned that some veterans find this disingenuous and would rather get to work on addressing concrete problems and needs than spend time on these kinds of pleasantries. Right after learning this, one of my clients told me the same thing. He said he did not like it when people thanked him for his service because he had a complicated relationship with his military service, and he felt like people were frequently lying when they said this.

These are just a few examples of what I have learned while working with the veteran community. Developing these relationships makes me realize how little I knew about such an integral part of the American political and cultural system. I am grateful to get the chance to expand my knowledge in this area.

I have also loved getting the chance to work in so many different areas of the law.



One of the reasons I was excited about this fellowship was because of the chance to work in all areas of civil legal aid. I have gotten to do exactly that: I have consumer law cases, criminal record sealing cases, eviction defense cases, a divorce case, VA benefits cases, and many more. I am getting the chance to become a generalist and learn from all my colleagues at NLSP.

II. INITIATIVES

I have implemented several initiatives this year to help restart and grow the veteran's program at NLSP. In February, I reached out to the Mayor's Office of Veteran's Affairs and have been cultivating a relationship with that organization. On February 29 and May 30, I presented at that roundtable about the fellowship and NLSP's services.

In March, I attended the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates (NOVA) conference in D.C. I received the William G. Smith Scholarship, which paid for my conference registration, so I was able to attend the conference at no cost to NLSP. At the conference, I heard in-person arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. I attended sessions about the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, the post 9/11 GI bill and VA-backed home loans, and the basics of service connection and traumatic brain injuries.

In June, I got a chance to show how much I have learned over the year by presenting a staff-wide internal training on the basics of the U.S. military system, discharge upgrades, and VA benefits. I loved having the opportunity to share so much of what I have been learning and working on and helping to strengthen the veteran program at NLSP.

In August, I gave a public information session on student loan debt. The session included information on student loan discharges for veterans who receive VA



benefits. Creating the power point presentation and informational sheet for that presentation was an excellent way for me to learn more about student loan law. Multiple NLSP staff members came to support me at that presentation, including NLSP's executive director.

“I LOVED HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE SO MUCH OF WHAT I HAVE BEEN LEARNING AND WORKING ON AND HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE VETERAN PROGRAM AT NLSP.”

III. CLIENTS SERVED

Since starting my fellowship in September of 2023, I have provided 33 veteran clients with advice, brief services, or representation. Below is a summary of those cases.

Closed cases

- I provided advice to a veteran on criminal record sealing and innocence motions for criminal record sealing.
- I provided advice to an elderly veteran on his rights in a rent abatement case.
- I provided advice to a veteran on an eviction case against him that was later dismissed.
- I provided advice to a veteran on how to get his landlord to make necessary repairs to his apartment.
- I provided advice to a veteran on his landlord's obligation and basic business licenses in D.C.



- I provided advice to a veteran on a past move out agreement he signed.
- I assisted a veteran in getting her student loans out of default and getting enrolled in an income-driven repayment plan. This case is closed. See more about this case in “Successes.” I am also providing this veteran with advice on what landlords in D.C. can and cannot include in leases. This new case is open.
- I provided an elderly female veteran with advice on asking her landlord for an updated ledger and with advice on her eligibility for veterans’ benefits. These cases are both closed.
- I provided a veteran with advice on suing his landlord for a return of past-paid rent due to housing conditions.
- I provided a veteran with advice on eligibility for veterans’ benefits.
- I represented a CL in an eviction case and got that case dismissed. See more about this case in “Successes.”
- I advised a veteran on timelines for criminal record sealing.
- I advised a veteran on filing a petition to reopen a probate case.
- I represented a CL in an eviction case and got that case dismissed and gave the client advice on another eviction case that was filed against him. See more about this case in “Successes.”
- I advised a CL on when creditors could call him and laws regarding creditor harassment. This case is closed. I am also investigating and will provide advice for this veteran on a possible discharge upgrade. The discharge upgrade case is open.
- I advised a veteran on the timeline and general rules for criminal record sealing.
- I advised a client on personal property laws in DC.



- I advised a veteran on getting her landlord to make necessary repairs to her apartment.
- I advised a veteran on getting an updated and accurate ledger from his landlord.
- I advised a veteran on a debt collection issue regarding unpaid utilities. This case is closed. I will also provide this veteran with advice on updating the information in her Military Personal File. This case is open.
- I helped a disabled and elderly veteran negotiate a move-out agreement with his landlord

Open Cases

- I am assisting a veteran in getting benefits from the VA for foot problems and general anxiety. I am also investigating a consumer debt issue for this veteran.
- I am assisting a young female veteran with applying for VA benefits for PTSD and working with her to get her discharge upgraded.
- I helped a young veteran suffering from PTSD successfully negotiate a move-out agreement with his landlord and decrease some of his debt obligation.
- I am aiding a severely disabled veteran and her son in an eviction case.
- I am assisting an elderly, disabled veteran by representing her in an eviction case by arguing that the eviction case was brought illegally. I am also assisting her with a debt collection case and investigating why her social security benefits were garnished.
- I am representing a veteran in an eviction case against him.
- I am representing a disabled veteran in an eviction case against him and working with him to get an uninvited guest to the apartment to leave.
- I assisted a disabled veteran by amending a complaint asking for money back



from his landlord due to terrible housing conditions, including lack of hot water and heat for years. I am also working with this veteran to investigate if he is eligible for a discharge upgrade.

- I am providing a veteran with advice on extra fees and excessive late charges on her ledger.
- I am representing a veteran in an eviction case.
- I aided an elderly and severely disabled veteran with filing out a complaint for divorce.

IV. SUCCESSES

My greatest overall success has been restarting the veterans' program at NLSP. Since starting at NLSP, I became accredited with the VA and I have started multiple cases for discharge upgrades and VA benefits. I have established relationships between NLSP and other veteran-centered organizations in D.C., generating a pipeline for cases and ensuring that NLSP's program has the resources it needs to provide our veterans clients with excellent legal services. I helped establish a referral pipeline from the D.C. Superior Court to NLSP via an Eviction Diversion Court Navigator, and this pipeline has resulted in many cases in only a few months. I regularly attend the Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs roundtable, and I have presented regarding NLSP's services and the fellowship at that roundtable twice. I also regularly attend the DC Military-Advisory Council meetings and exchange information about upcoming NLSP events with that organization. I am also building relationships and referrals pipelines with organizations like The Veterans Consortium, US Vets, and Easterseals, and am working on plans to solidify partnerships that will increase NLSP's offerings to veterans in the District.

Three of my cases stand out to me as my biggest success. The first was this winter,



when I helped a veteran client get her student loans out of default. She had about \$70,000 in student loan debt, and the loans had been in default for years. I helped the client enroll in the Fresh Start Program, which got her loans out of default. This program began at the end of the COVID-19 payment pause to help borrowers with defaulted federal student loans reenter repayment in good standing and access plans for long term affordability. As part of enrolling in Fresh Start, I also helped her enroll in an income-driven repayment plan (IDR). Now her student loan payments are \$0 a month. After a certain number of years making payments under this plan, her loans should be forgiven. By helping the client sign up for these programs, we helped her avoid a total of \$70,000 of overdue debt obligations.

“AFTER A CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS MAKING PAYMENTS UNDER THIS PLAN, HER LOANS SHOULD BE FORGIVEN. BY HELPING THE CLIENT SIGN UP FOR THESE PROGRAMS, WE HELPED HER AVOID A TOTAL OF \$70,000 OF OVERDUE DEBT OBLIGATIONS.”

I was successful in keeping several veterans stably housed this year, but two wins stand out. The first case began in February, when a client came to us one afternoon and asked for representation for a hearing she had the next

day. I worked with NLSP colleagues that afternoon and evening to interview the client and prepare for the hearing, and I represented her the next day. I later filed a motion to dismiss the case, arguing that the suing party was the wrong party to bring a case and that the correct party—the new property manager—did not have a basic business license, and therefore could not bring a case. The day before the day of the hearing on that motion, the plaintiff dismissed the case.

This July, I was able to get another eviction case against a client dismissed. The plaintiff failed to serve our client after over six months. The plaintiff had multiple



opportunities to serve our client and several extensions. At the hearing, I argued that the case should be dismissed for lack of service. The plaintiff's attorney argued that our client would be served quickly if the plaintiff was given another extension, but the court was not persuaded. It was thrilling to be able to make an argument in real time and have the judge rule in favor of our client!

While working with these and other clients, I have come to realize how many hurdles my veteran clients face when trying to access the justice system. This is particularly challenging for my clients who deal with PTSD and challenges in executive function. For example, the client whose case was dismissed in February has a lot of trouble keeping track of dates and times. She had already missed several hearings before I stepped into the case. Even before I successfully got the case dismissed, I was able to increase her understanding of the case and make sure she knew when important dates were coming up. Walking clients through the court process is a large part of my day-to-day work. Doing this work is another one of my successes, because it has increased the D.C. veteran population's access to legal services and understanding of the legal system.

V. CHALLENGES

Some of my biggest challenges in this program have been restarting the veterans' program at NLSP, getting the word out about restarting the program, and connecting veterans who might benefit from our services with those services. As I connect with other veteran-focused organizations, I am beginning to understand how challenging it can be to connect people who could benefit from our services with those services. There are so many issues that NLSP can help with, but many people don't realize that free legal services might be the answer when they can't get their landlord to turn their electricity on or they receive non-stop calls from creditors. I am working



with other veteran-focused organizations like Serving Together, the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, and Easterseals to continue to build our referral network and help clients get the help they need.

“IT WAS CHALLENGING TO LEARN THE BASICS OF PRACTICING LAW, DIFFERENT AREAS OF LAW, AND DEVELOPING NLSP'S VETERANS' PROGRAM, BUT I ENJOY LOOKING BACK AT HOW MUCH I HAVE LEARNED AND HOW MUCH MY CONFIDENCE HAS GROWN IN A YEAR.”

Another one of my biggest challenges has been learning about all the areas of law I practice in and learning some of the basics of practicing law in general. For example, last October, after I signed a retainer with a client, I had to submit a *praecipe* letting the court know I would represent that client. Finding the right format for the *praecipe*, filling it out, and filing it took me at least an hour. Now, filling out and filing a *praecipe* takes me less than five minutes. While learning how to complete other administrative and general legal tasks, I also grew the veterans' program. I did this while learning the basics of consumer law (including debt collection, credit reporting, and student loans), public benefits law, criminal record sealing law, housing law, family law, discharge upgrades, and veterans' benefits. It was challenging to learn the basics of practicing law, different areas of law, and developing NLSP's veterans' program, but I enjoy looking back at how much I have learned and how much my confidence has grown in a year.



VI. GOALS FOR THE NEXT HALF YEAR

For the next half year, I expect to write more complaints and spend more time in court than ever before. At the end of August, I filed my first complaint, and it made me excited to write many more. I will be working with at least one client to sue her landlord for illegal debt collection. My goal is to continue looking for these cases and file complaints when appropriate, especially in debt collection cases. As I spend more time in court in my housing cases and with newly filed complaints, I am also looking forward to having an evidentiary hearing. I have had many status hearings, but I have not yet had the opportunity to present evidence or examine a witness in court.

I also have some big goals for November. NLSP will be focusing our library clinics in November on veterans, so I will be attending multiple library clinics and hopefully getting many new clients. I also plan to participate in the VA's annual veteran's stand-down event in late November, as I did last year.

I am looking forward to another year of the fellowship!



SUPERVISOR EVALUATION

FEBRUARY 2024



Equal Justice America – Supervisor Report – A. Himonas

Alexandra “Alexa” Himonas has been a very welcome addition to the Neighborhood Legal Services Program of DC team (NLSP). In her short time at NLSP, Alexa has provided stellar direct legal services to low-income veterans, represented our office at community/national events and contributed to in-house trainings.

Knowledge and Skills

As an EJA Fellow, Alexa represents veterans in a wide array of legal issues including housing, public benefits, student loans, consumer protections, and of course, Veteran Affairs claims. In early February, Alexa prevented a scheduled eviction for a disabled veteran through her adept writing and oral advocacy in the Superior Court of District of Columbia – Landlord Tenant Branch. In another case, with less than 24 hours turnaround time, she met with and entered her appearance in a landlord tenant case, assisting a veteran in avoiding entry of a default as a sanction for failure to adhere to court orders when the veteran experienced difficulty in paying her protective order and confusion about the entire court process. In January, Alexa assisted a veteran in bringing her student loans out of default and enrolling in an income driven payment plan. This plan will ensure that the veteran has affordable (zero dollar) minimum payments so long as her income remains low, and the program will end in loan forgiveness.

Alexa has also provided veterans with counsel and advice at a series of monthly clinics NLSP hosts. These clinics occur once a week every month at four District of Columbia Public Libraries, in wards most impacted by poverty, and monthly clinics with the National Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. In addition to these clinics, Alexa has assisted NLSP in creating a direct referral pipeline between the D.C. Superior Court’s navigators, and Alexa has represented several clients directly referred by the Court. Alexa was accredited by the Veterans Administration to work on cases before the VA in November of 2023. She is currently working with two clients whose cases require this credential.

Alexa is very inquisitive and seems to enjoy research. She has attended several trainings and conferences including: PLI trainings on VA Benefits; DC Bar Pro Bono Center trainings on Social Security Benefits and Housing; and Alexa attended the National Consumer Law Center’s National Consumer Rights Litigation Conference in Chicago, IL in October. At the NCLC conference, the premiere consumer protections conference in the country, Alexa had the opportunity to connect with veterans’ advocates from civil legal aid organizations from around the country. These advocates were able to provide her with guidance on how to work with veterans most effectively and shared program models to base her practice at NLSP on. These trainings have



allowed Alexa to provide advice and brief services on a wide variety of legal issues and has provided her with a solid base for cases that require deeper intervention.

Communication and Teamwork

Alexa communicates and works professionally, and positively with NLSP clients and her colleagues. She is kind and understanding and has demonstrated great effectiveness in developing a client relationship of trust with very vulnerable clients. Alexa is also very responsive to her clients. Although not required, Alexa often meets with her clients in person and is very flexible in consideration of her clients' schedules when choosing times to do so. When Alexa's clients are not in contact with her, she uses several methods to reach them and continues to provide services. She is also culturally sensitive and works with a diverse population. NLSP's client population lives in deep poverty, many are elderly, many have significant disabilities, and many are unhoused. These barriers make skills in developing trust and showing diligence with hard-to-reach clients especially important.

Alexa is also cooperative and helpful to NLSP staff. Alexa started in the Economic Security Unit at the same time as two new colleagues. Not long after her start, two additional new colleagues started. Alexa has shown generosity in her willingness to support her new colleagues, even as she is adjusting to her first several months of practice. In addition to being a sounding board for her colleagues, Alexa also helps foster a positive social environment at our office. Alexa volunteered at our annual holiday gift drive in December by directing clients and organizing after the event. As a part of the "Fun Committee", Alexa helped to plan our annual holiday party and Valentine's Day cookie competition. Alexa also participated in our annual fundraiser – Jazz for Justice – in November.

Work Habits

Alexa consistently meets internal deadlines and external deadlines set by the various tribunals. When she needs more time to complete a task, Alexa informs us in an appropriate manner and maintains good control over her case load. Alexa also arrives at meetings on time and is very accessible even when working remotely. Alexa is compliant with all NLSP policies and demonstrates a commitment to our Guiding Principles and a strong understanding and commitment to our Racial Equity commitments. She promptly enters her client notes into our case management system and inputs any dates into our shared calendar. Additionally, her work product is very strong, and often only requires only one round of edits to result in a practically useful pleading that is ready to be filed in court.

Challenges



While Alexa is eager to work with clients, NLSP initially had somewhat of a dearth of clients who served in the military. This is because NLSP's veterans practice had been closed several years ago, and was only restarted when Alexa came on. However, with Alexa's onboarding, NLSP is revitalizing our veteran's practice. Alexa has been an integral part in growing our services to veterans by accepting court referrals, referrals from the mayor's office, and referrals from other non-profit organizations. As stated above, Alexa has further contributed to our veteran's practice through her willingness to represent clients in a wide array of legal matters. Alexa hopes to represent clients in even more areas of law including public benefits and consumer debt defense cases.

Goals

Alexa is very ambitious and has set several goals to achieve in the coming months. At present, Alexa is preparing an internal training on the basics of discharge upgrades and VA law. Alexa is also preparing a know your rights workshop on student loans for patrons of the District of Columbia Public Library. Alexa also plans to attend the Veteran Roundtable hosted by the D.C. Mayors Office of Veteran Affairs, in addition to the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates 2024 Spring Conference here in Washington, DC. Alexa currently has extended cases in trial posture and is preparing for her first bench trial in D.C. Superior Court.

NLSP is hopeful that Alexa will assist our office in growing our burgeoning veteran's practice and become an internal resource for training her colleagues in the Economic Security Unit on how to better serve veterans in the District. We are also hopeful that Alexa will take on more complex cases in housing and consumer law. We will further assist Alexa in strengthening her existing skills in writing, oral argument, and in court litigation skills. We are excited to continue working with Alexa in the coming months to help her grow into an even stronger advocate for veterans in the District.

Sincerely,

John K. Blake

John K. Blake, Esq.
Managing Attorney
Economic Security Unit



SUPERVISOR EVALUATION

SEPTEMBER 2024



Equal Justice America – Year End Supervisor Report – A. Himonas

Over the last year, Alexa has grown into a skilled advocate for her veterans clients. Alexa has an easy demeanor about her that puts her clients quickly at ease. Alexa’s writing and research are excellent, and this has aided her in getting up to speed in new areas of law very quickly. Although NLSP has had a veterans practice for some time, in recent years the practice was on hiatus. Alexa came to NLSP with energy, and quickly built up a diverse practice of cases for veterans. Alexa has worked on approximately 60 cases, that have touched on a wide variety of legal issues such as, routine eviction defense and housing cases, international service of process in a divorce proceeding, veterans pension claims, rental housing subsidy denials, federal student loans, unlawful and abusive debt collection, credit reporting disputes, criminal record sealing, and discrimination against those with criminal records. Alexa came to us after a state supreme court clerkship for the state of Utah, and because of the skills she developed during that clerkship she was pulled in to assist me on a D.C. Court of Appeals Brief and Reply Brief. Alexa has assisted her clients at many levels of litigation. She has had several initial and scheduling hearings in three different divisions of the Superior Court. She has engaged in strategic and aggressive motions practice and has been successful in motions in several of her cases. She has guided her clients through discovery, represented clients in court ordered mediation, and has settled several cases. Her performance in her first year of her fellowship has been excellent.

Knowledge and Skills

The Economic Security Unit is something of a generalist unit, touching on many different areas of practice. Alexa’s work has been even more so a generalist practice as her fellowship is focused on a population of clients instead of a particular practice area. Alexa has had the chance to work with all of our three substantive units, and has earned a reputation for solid work, excellent and efficient case focused research, a strong and practical understanding of litigation strategy, and for picking up new areas of law at speed with great practical effect.

Because of the District’s decades long affordable housing crisis, many of our clients come to us with problems with housing security. Two of our substantive units assist clients with



housing issues, the Housing Unit and the Economic Security Unit. The Housing Unit assists clients while they are in possession of rental housing, and the Economic Security Unit assists clients before they become at risk of eviction and after they have left their rental accommodation. In this way, our firm helps low-income District residents through all phases of their rental housing experience.

Alexa has assisted veterans at all points in their rental housing experience. In one of her first cases, Alexa jumped into a case in Landlord Tenant Court days before a sanctions hearing. The veteran was being sanctioned because they had failed to pay a protective order in a non-payment case. Part of the Veteran's failure to participate was due to experiencing mental health challenges that stemmed from their service to our country. The veteran did not really understand the court process, was not able to deal with the stress of participating in the process and had experienced housing conditions that exacerbated their mental health conditions.

Alexa had to quickly learn the legal standard for protective orders, the bases for modification of protective orders, and the grounds for defenses against a claim of noncompliance, all while identifying how to defend the veteran in the underlying case. Alexa helped another veteran figure out how to serve a spouse who lived abroad with process in a divorce proceeding, helping to ensure that the veteran's public benefits would not be negatively impacted by the soon to be former spouse's income and assets. Alexa has assisted many veterans in defending themselves against predatory debt collection and credit reporting disputes, which has required her to get up to speed on a complex area of overlapping federal and "state" consumer protection statutes and regulations. Alexa has also assisted several veterans with discharge upgrades, in seeking VA medical benefits, and in seeking VA pensions, a robust area of administrative practice. Alexa has excelled at obtaining a practical facility with new areas of law, focused on her client's goals in individual cases.

Communication and Teamwork

Alexa also excels as a member of our team, both in her work within the Economic Security Unit and as a colleague in the broader firm. Alexa's work requires her to work closely with colleagues



throughout the firm, attorney and non-attorney, management and program level. Alexa has demonstrated a willingness to dive in and utilize her skills to great practical benefit not only to her clients, but to her colleagues, and even her supervisors. As mentioned above, Alexa assisted me in a DCCA appellate case against a tight deadline, even while she had case work and deadlines of her own looming. Alexa is well respected and well liked within our firm, and she often volunteers for projects and to fill in for colleagues. Alexa is also generous in sharing her knowledge and skills and excels at self-assessment, identifying where she has knowledge gaps. She takes direction well and is humble in her approach to learning from her peers as much as her mentors and supervisors. As mentioned above and in her Mid-Year Report, Alexa is also an effective communicator with her clients, developing solid rapport and trust which she is able to use in her advocacy on their behalf in their cases.

Work Habits

Alexa's work habits are very good. Like all new case handlers, Alexa is learning how to juggle multiple cases in different postures, juggling competing deadlines, drafting work-product while managing high volume dockets, all while keeping in good contact with clients. This requires an organized approach to time-management, a willingness to be flexible about work schedule, and efficiency and organization in approach to drafting. Alexa understands the value of carving out time for planning and demonstrates a high level of skill for someone of her level of case handling experience.

Challenges

Alexa's biggest challenge over the last year has been reinvigorating a program that was on hiatus, while learning several new substantive areas of practice, new venues and civil procedure, building new skills and experiences, and developing her personal approach as an advocate. Alexa has met these challenges with grace and patience, while excelling at her work. Another challenge is that as a new advocate, learning the difference between what should happen in a case and what does happen with so many imperfect humans involved only comes with experience. As Alexa's



experience grows, she has demonstrated a solid understanding for strategic planning in a case, adapting to all of the variables that one's client's, opposing counsel's, a judge's, and perhaps even her manager's idiosyncrasies bring to litigation. This has served her extremely well, ensuring that she can focus on achieving practical outcomes for her clients that leave them better off than when they sought our services.

Goals

Alexa has consistently met the goals that we have for her and that she has for herself in her fellowship. Alexa has built relationships and formalized workflows with partner organizations expanding NLSP's reach and building our reputation as an institution where veterans can get tailored assistance from dedicated advocates. Alexa set out to develop enough knowledge to be a resource for her colleagues on veterans' case, and she met that goal culminating in presenting to the firm on issue spotting in veterans' cases. As Alexa's knowledge continues to grow, this will be an ongoing goal.

At her midyear report, Alexa set a goal of working on more complex housing and consumer cases, and she recently filed her first affirmative civil complaint for several counts of violations of the Rental Housing Act, for negligence, and for breach of contract. This complaint was filed in the Civil Division for cases with damages exceeding ten thousand dollars and will proceed in a more formalized way than the Superior Court's high volume summary divisions. Although Alexa has not yet had an evidentiary hearing or bench trial, that has only been because she was successfully able to settle cases that were on a trial trajectory. We are hopeful that as Alexa's program goes in volume, and her court time increases as it has over the last few months, she will have opportunities for evidentiary hearings and bench trials as well as more complex motions practice and discovery.

Alexa has participated in our long-standing partnership with the D.C. Public Library throughout her fellowship thus far, and she is taking a more leadership role in integrating her fellowship goals into our community outreach program. She recently presented a know-your-



rights presentation on federal student loan law and will be working with her colleagues to focus some of our November clinics on veterans' legal issues in acknowledgement of Veterans' Day. We are excited to work with Alexa as she continues to build up her skills and experiences as an advocate as well as our program in service to District veterans.

Sincerely,

John K. Blake

John K. Blake, Esq.
Managing Attorney
Economic Security Unit