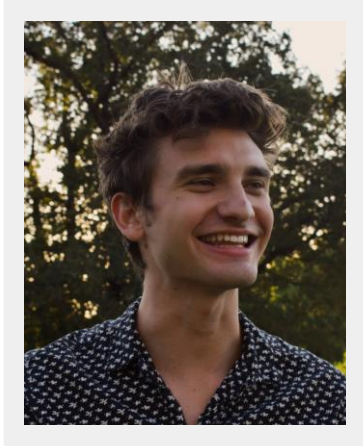




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Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



Name: Jordan Miller

Law School: New York University

Organization: Greater Boston Legal Services

Update 1: I'm so grateful to receive funding through Equal Justice America to support my legal work with Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS), a branch of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), over the summer.

I started my legal internship on May 22, and I've been working in the housing, elder, and disability law units. Some of the work I've completed includes drafting documents to send to opposing council and working on agreements that help lower-income tenants stay in their home.

The most rewarding part of my work thus far, though, has been meeting clients face-to-face to better understand their issues and see what legal help we can provide. This past semester, I was able to work at a clinic through my law school that assisted pro bono advocates filing federal cases in the Southern District of New York. Though that was surely rewarding work, our clinic primarily interacted with advocates virtually, and I was unable to meet any of the people I was assisting in person. For this summer internship, though, I have met multiple clients in person, and those meetings have made the importance and impact of my work manifest.

I look forward to continuing to assist low-income clients with their legal issues. Equal Justice America is a nonprofit that helps fund law students working with people in poverty, increasing the number of future lawyers who have experience doing public interest work and ensuring everyone has access to justice.

Update 2: The past couple weeks, I've gained a better understanding of representing low-income tenants within the greater Boston area. I did similar work last summer, but I was working in Maine. There, we were dealing with more individual, smaller-size landlords who owned only one or two rental properties. Here, we are representing tenants who are facing eviction from larger corporate entities.

Because I am serving in the housing unit that also focuses on benefits, we also work with tenants who have Section 8 vouchers. This has been a new experience for me and has opened my eyes to the complexities and



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specifics of Section 8 housing. I am extremely grateful that I was able to gain these learning experiences by working in and around a larger city like Boston—an experience that has been made possible through my Equal Justice America summer fellowship.

I have also sat in on a meeting between my supervisor and a mother who was unsatisfied with how a public school was handling her child's IEP. This is another area of the law that I did not realize legal services could reach directly.

Because my supervisor is involved in representing a client in a class action lawsuit, I may be learning how to do document review later this week. Hopefully, I will witness my supervisor defend her client in a deposition.

Over the past couple weeks, I have been able to gain a better understanding of what a legal services provider can do not only in terms of housing and tenant representation, but also benefits and class action work.

Update 3: Over the past couple weeks at CASLS, my supervisor has given me more discretion over the cases I handle. This has allowed me to take on more cases, as I have not needed to go to my supervisor with minor questions before moving forward. The increased workload is challenging, but it is also so much more rewarding than only working on a couple of boilerplate cases that still required direct instructions and supervision. Because I did similar work last summer, I felt ready to take on more of a challenge in terms of workload and autonomy when handling cases.

I have also been assisting my supervisor in preparing for a Class Action lawsuit by performing document review. Though one may think that document review is grating (and I am sure it is for paralegals and interns who almost exclusively work on document review for days at a time), it has been a welcome contrast to other work I have been working on. Reviewing documents added texture and context to the case, so I have a better understanding of the ins and outs of the issues in the case. This was also my first time working on doc review, so I am grateful that I gained this skill before finishing law school.

Because the past couple weeks have been busier and the work more varied, they have really flown by. As I write this, I only have 2 1/2 weeks left of my internship, which is difficult to believe.

Update 4: I write this update at the start of my last week of my summer internship. As I start to wrap things up and close cases, in some ways it feels like this internship just started. But in when I look over the work I've done over the past couple months, I am grateful for the impact I was able to make through this internship.

In my final week, there are two cases that have most of my attention. One has been a success story: I have helped someone recertify their Section 8 benefits and they will be able to stay in their housing. That case has provided me with inspiration needed to work on other cases that are not as cut-and-dry, and have a higher chance of failure. The other case I am working on, for example, presents a higher probability that the tenant will not achieve the result they want most. Still, even though we may not reach the best-case scenario, my work thus far has allowed the tenant to remain in their housing for longer than they would have had I not worked on the case.

I think that the two cases I just wrote about--the Section 8 case and the likely eviction--represent key aspects of public interest service work. Through these cases, I have experienced the highs and lows of providing civil legal services to tenants facing housing problems. I will save an overview of and my final thoughts on the internship



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for my final update. However, to put it briefly, this internship has made me even more confident that I want to pursue a career in civil legal services post-graduation.

Update 5: I learned so much during my ten weeks at the Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (CASLS) unit of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). Last summer, I worked in Maine helping tenants facing eviction, and, following that internship, I knew that I was potentially interested in pursuing tenant work after I graduated law school. This summer, thanks to the fantastic support at CASLS and the work that I accomplished there, I know that I want to start my career assisting and representing tenants who are facing eviction.

Because my supervisor gave me discretion and room to handle my own cases, I feel that this internship prepared me for post-graduation work. I saw cases through all stages: intake, issue spotting, coaching, representation, and closing, to name a few. Because I have spent my post-college years in a COVID world where much of my work was conducted virtually, I underestimated the impact and reward of face-to-face interactions with clients. This summer, I was able to meet many clients in person, whether that was to conduct intakes or in later stages of a case. Those interactions will stick with me: the joy of a client who receives good news and the disappointment of a client receiving bad news hits harder in person. Though I realize that virtual work has its place in our world, I was reminded of the importance of in-person interactions in terms of reminding myself why I want to pursue a career in civil legal services.

I was surprised by CASLS' connections to other organizations within the community. For example, we often worked with the Cambridge Multi-Service Center to help clients with rent arrearage funding. Through multi-org collaboration, I was reminded that, many times, people's legal problems do not exist within a vacuum. That is, there are wider societal, structural injustices that cause people to be in a situation where they are facing eviction. Complex issues often require multi-faceted responses where legal assistance is only one of the vital tools available to those facing injustice.

This summer, I feel that I significantly assisted low-income individuals facing injustice. On a more personal note, I felt the rewarding sensation of serving others that is required by someone who works in civil legal services. Because my time at CASLS was so impactful and personally rewarding, we are currently working on developing a fellowship to take place at CASLS following my law school graduation this upcoming May. Hopefully, I am able to continue the work I was doing this summer.

Thank you to Equal Justice America and GBLS/CASLS for helping to ensure low-income people have the legal assistance they need to combat injustice.