



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## Summer 2023 EJA Fellow:



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**Organization:** Legal Aid Chicago

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### Update 1: Hey everyone!

I wanted to take a moment to share an update on my summer so far as a legal intern for Legal Aid Chicago. I have been lucky enough to join the Housing Practice Group at Legal Aid Chicago and it has been an exciting and insightful journey, filled with valuable learning opportunities. Before coming to LAC the only experience I had in Housing was my first semester Property course, but it has been incredibly eye-opening to learn about the complexity of the field and the deep impact it has on so many people.

It has been such a great opportunity to be in the Housing practice group because of how collaborative the office is. Working alongside experienced attorneys and my fellow interns has been incredibly rewarding. The collaborative nature of the internship has allowed me to learn from their expertise and the various perspectives they bring to the table. Looking forward to the rest of my summer!

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### Update 2: Happy 4th of July everybody!

It's been a couple weeks, so here's another EJA Fellow Update from my time with Legal Aid Chicago. Now that I've had time to settle in, time has absolutely flown by with all the different work I've done and people I've met. I've had the opportunity to work closely with a few of the attorneys on a variety of different cases and it's been so great to get these new perspectives on new issues and learn from them and the new issues I've come across. I'm currently gearing up to argue my first motion in court soon and I am incredibly excited to apply what I've learned at law school and from my time here and make a difference in the client's case and life. Looking forward to it!

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### Update 3: Hey everyone!

Now that I'm nearing the end of my internship with Legal Aid Chicago I wanted to provide another Equal Justice America update on my summer law internship journey! It's been great really getting into the swing of things in the Housing Practice Groups and keeping busy with my fair share of assignments. Legal research has



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been a major part of my internship. I've delved into numerous cases, statutes, and regulations, for a variety of issues and cases and definitely have felt my skills in this area develop. I had my first court appearance and while incredibly nerve-racking, it went smoothly and solidified my interest in litigating. On top of this, one of the cases that I wrote a motion to dismiss ended up being dismissed which meant the client could remain in their apartment indefinitely. This was a really great feeling to see the outcome of the work I had done and the good it did! With much of the internship behind me, I'm excited about what the remaining weeks hold. I hope to take have the opportunity to argue the motion to seals and dismiss I have written. Thank you all for your support and encouragement throughout this journey! I'll keep you updated on my progress!

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**Update 4:** Hey everybody, now that I'm towards the end of my time here with Legal Aid Chicago, I wanted to provide another EJA Fellow Update through Equal Justice America! I wanted to write about some of the skills I've developed and things I've learned from my time here.

A skill I developed this summer was problem solving. Many of the issues I worked on this summer were completely new to me because I had no prior experience in housing law, and while the assigning attorneys did a great job of providing samples, many of the issues I tackled required me to review the case and formulate the possible defenses and whether they were viable or not. Often the assigning attorneys would come to me with the case and have some defenses in mind and there were times where I would re-examine the case and decide that some defenses weren't winners or other routes might be better. I learned that while I might have some of these ideas early on, it wouldn't be helpful to bring it to the assigning attorney until I had fleshed out my research and provided my reasoning for the decision and alternatives.

With this came developing my research skills. I spent a lot of my time researching issues both in Illinois and nationally and I definitely feel more confident in my abilities. I have done a better job of streamlining my research process by keeping track of the searches I use and approaching it in a more systematic way so that I don't leaves stones unturned or make silly mistakes.

A point of emphasis in the Housing Practice Group was centered on client interaction, from managing client expectations to handling uncooperative clients to simply maintaining a dialogue. Working with a variety of attorneys through the summer I was able to see a wide range of experiences with clients and hear about many different situations. A big thing I took away was perspective and understanding the position the client is in. Clients come to Legal Aid Chicago with various expectations, preconceptions, difficulties, etc., so it's important to understand the client's position and listen to them and their goals so we can best evaluate how/whether we can help them and steps moving forward.

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**Update 5:** Hello everybody!

This is my final EJA Fellow Update from my summer internship with Legal Aid Chicago!



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I have had an extraordinary time working with the attorneys and other interns at the Housing Practice Group and working on meaningful projects that have left me feeling accomplished and proud. From day one, I was immersed in a niche and fast-paced legal environment. Further, much of the material and work was entirely new to me so it was exciting to learn all this information, and I am incredibly thankful to the talented and supportive attorneys who guided me through various aspects of the housing field.

I had the chance to work on a wide range of projects, from researching complex case law to drafting motions, and even appearing and speaking in court proceedings. Each task presented its own set of challenges, but with the guidance of my mentors, I was able to overcome them and deliver meaningful contributions. They were active and kind enough to sit with me early on in projects and discuss it and answer any questions I had and give me feedback after I submitted my assignments. I felt like I really grew this summer based on the advice and feedback I received over a variety of topics (from procedural to personal growth).

What I also appreciated from this summer was the variety of work I completed across the posture of cases. I was able to work early on cases where I was analyzing the case for defenses and helping the attorney develop the case and identify whether there was something we could do. I was able to work on motions to dismiss, and motions to seal, and even some work on a potential appeal. It was a great way for me to learn about the different strategies and priorities across the timeline of a case.

The biggest highlight for me was when I learned from my supervising attorney that a motion to dismiss I wrote ended up being unopposed by opposing counsel so that the client's case was dismissed and sealed. When I heard this it was a great feeling of triumph, but what brought me the most joy and satisfaction was when I realized the effect this would have on the client. The client would be able to continue living in their apartment for the foreseeable future and their debt would be wiped. When I realized how great of an impact this would have on their life it brought me immense satisfaction and renewed vigor for the work I was doing. It really humanized the work for me and helped me realize that I placed a great importance in the effect my work has on the client.

As I end this chapter of my journey, I am walking away with not only a wealth of legal knowledge but also a network of connections that I know will be invaluable as I continue to pursue a career in law. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my fellow interns, attorneys, and supervisors who invested their time and energy in guiding me throughout this internship. Your support and encouragement have been instrumental in my growth, and I'm excited to carry forward the lessons I've learned.

Thank you all! And thank you to Equal Justice America for making it all possible.