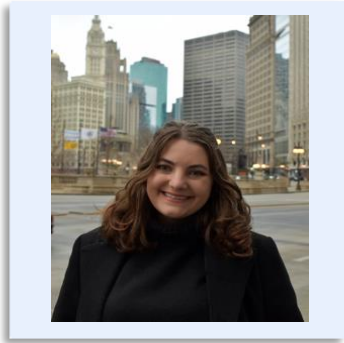




EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

SUMMER 2024

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Hannah Strahl
LAW SCHOOL	DePaul University College of Law
ORGANIZATION	Legal Aid Chicago

Update 1: As I begin my third week working as a legal intern at Legal Aid Chicago in the Housing Practice Group, I am happy to share an update! Working as an intern at Legal Aid Chicago thus far has already been very rewarding and informative. I have been able to quickly learn about the Housing Practice Group's important work and meet welcoming, experienced colleagues. The work being conducted here is incredibly impactful and exhibits the fight for all to have equitable access to fair legal representation. Everyone should have access to adequate housing, and the work at Legal Aid Chicago Housing Practice Group pulls together experienced attorneys from around Chicago who are knowledgeable on tenant rights to enforce existing protections and educate clientele on their rights. Especially, under the supervision of these attorneys, I have been learning about subsidized housing laws, eviction law, fair housing law, and federal and state protections. Overall, Equal Justice America has placed me in a position to get firsthand experience in Public Interest Law and utilize my time to contribute to those in need. I look forward to sharing more updates throughout the summer as I further my experience here and broaden my knowledge on eviction and fair housing laws.

Update 2: This week marks my halfway point of summer interning at Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group, which means it is time for another update as part of my Equal Justice America Fellowship.

At Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group, I have been gaining broad experience in Fair Housing Practices and defending clients being unfairly evicted. More specifically, I have been drafting various motions and observing attorneys argue them in court. Most importantly, I have been able to conduct intakes and work with clients hands-on.

Additionally, this week I attended Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)'s Pro Bono Reception with a few of my colleagues. This was a great opportunity to network with attorneys and other EJA fellows as well! The event was very encouraging by seeing the community's passion for Pro Bono and Public Interest work.



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Update 3: It's another week which means it's time for another summer internship update as part of my fellowship with Equal Justice America.

My summer internship at Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group continues to be an enlightening and efficient learning experience. Since my last update, I have completed a Motion to Dismiss to be filed, as well as a Motion to Compel Discovery and a Motion to Continue Trial. This gave me insight into the intricate steps of a case before it reaches trial. These past two weeks, however, I have also been working on researching various housing subsidies, organizing client files, and investigating client evidence. Investigating client evidence has been incredibly interesting because it gives me the chance to analyze potential defenses and further inquire into aspects of a case. This experience has broadened my knowledge of the court system and has improved my skills in legal writing, client counseling, research and advocacy.

Update 4: As the summer is soon ending, I am starting to reflect on my internship. That means it is also time for my fourth and second to last summer internship update as part of my fellowship with Equal Justice America!

Here at Legal Aid Chicago, I have been further working on my writing and negotiation skills. Specifically, I have been working conducting intakes with clients, researching potential defenses, and drafting negotiation emails to reach settlements with opposing counsel. This is important because it helps clients resolve their cases quickly with little to no litigation.

Additionally, this past week I attended the EJA Law Student and Alumni Reception. It was a lovely event to meet alumni and learn about the firm's work, hosted at Miner, Barnhill & Galland PC.

Update 5: As the summer comes to an end, it is time for my fifth, (and final!) update post as part of my Equal Justice America Fellowship.

Reflecting on my summer working with Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group, I learned a lot and will take my gained knowledge into my future studies and work. This summer has provided me with the experiential learning that I needed to better understand the real world application of the law. In law school, we learn a lot about the theoretical applications of the law, as well as strategies and legal writing basics. However, my first law school summer internship at Legal Aid Chicago showed me how it is applied to real stories, and real people who need help.

I have learned how to draft briefs, conduct client intakes, investigation, compile evidence, communicate with clients, and have seen firsthand the beginning to the end of cases. Specifically, I learned the process of the Early Resolution Program, attending court to receive live referrals and conduct client intakes for those who have been unfairly evicted, and require assistance with either maintaining their unit or negotiating a move-out agreement in exchange for a dismissal of their eviction. This helped resolve landlord and tenant disputes and take evictions off of our clients' records. This was especially impactful to those who had subsidized housing, where evictions are harmful to maintaining their housing vouchers, or other various



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subsidies that provided them with affordable and attainable housing. Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group has been a fantastic place for my first law school summer internship, as the staff was welcoming, hard working, and an overall collaborative team. It was great to work with everyone, help each other with different insights, and have support.

This has been a great opportunity, and I look forward to further gaining experience in Public Interest Law in Chicago.

As a reminder, Equal Justice America Fellows are provided updates on our legal work this summer as a reminder that we wouldn't be able to accomplish what we are without the fantastic contributions of Equal Justice America, and to spread awareness about the work to close the access-to-justice gap. We aim to inspire supporters to further contribute to the cause.