



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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Update 1: Here is my first EJA Fellow update from my summer at New Hampshire Legal Assistance! NHLA provides free civil legal aid to low-income residents of New Hampshire for a variety of legal issues they may be facing. Throughout my first two weeks here, I've gotten to complete training on a lot of really cool practice areas and projects including our Domestic Violence Advocacy Project, Housing Justice Project, Youth Law Project, Justice in Aging Project, Energy & Utility Justice Project, and Foreclosure Relief Project. It's been awesome getting to see all the ways NHLA helps New Hampshire residents to attain really crucial services such as getting victims of domestic violence the protective orders they need or helping prevent clients from being evicted and losing their housing.

Unfortunately, there is less than one legal aid attorney for every 10,000 residents with low-income in New Hampshire. This means NHLA has to regularly turn away eligible clients because there is not the staff or volunteer capacity to handle all of the cases. I've attached links below to donate to either the NH Campaign for Legal Services or the Equal Justice America fellowship, which help make this work possible by funding the people who do it since we do not accept payment from our clients.

<https://www.nh-cla.org/you-can-help/donate-now/>

<https://www.classy.org/campaign/eja-2024-fellows-fundraiser/c552026>

Update 2: Some updates: I have finished up the official training portion of my internship which is exciting. For the last parts of my training, I got to shadow my supervising attorney in court representing clients seeking domestic violence protective orders (DVPOs) and then prepare for a mock trial where I argued for why my "client" needed a DVPO. These experiences were helpful for getting a sense of what family court is like and what is important for ensuring that victims receive DVPOs. Now, I am getting the opportunity to assist on cases involving a variety of our



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practice areas including denial of benefits, eviction, and elderly exploitation. Working with the attorneys and our office staff on these cases is helping give me a better idea of what the day to day looks like at a legal aid, and it is really exciting being able to interact with clients for the first time. It is really moving to hear each client's individual story, and I hope to do all I can to help them feel heard. This has already been such a great learning experience for developing the skills to work at a civil legal aid and I am excited to see what comes next!

Update 3: Some more updates— it is hard to believe my internship is over halfway over already! I am now getting the chance to work on seven cases. It's been really awesome getting to explore all of the practice areas New Hampshire Legal Assistance has and to get to work with a variety of different attorneys. Each attorney I work with has a unique skillset and a unique way of handling conflicts that come up in cases or talking to clients, so it's been really eye opening getting to learn from so many of the wonderful attorneys at New Hampshire Legal Assistance. This week, I also got to lead my first mediation! It was really rewarding getting the chance to help a client I had been working with for weeks get a favorable outcome from the tenant-landlord mediation and to keep them from getting evicted. Last week, I also got to go to both our domestic violence and eviction clinics. These clinics allow us to help a large amount of clients at once with getting protective orders or being able to keep their home. New Hampshire Legal Assistance runs these clinics every week as a great way to help the community on a wide scale. I am excited to keep getting the opportunity to assist on cases and to shadow the attorneys at the clinics. These opportunities are really helping me grow as a law student and a professional, and I'm very grateful to New Hampshire Legal Assistance for having me.

Update 4: Some more updates for my fourth EJA post: at this point, I am pretty in the swing of things. I am trying to balance my time between assisting attorneys on current cases and getting the opportunity to shadow hearings and attend the clinics. This week, I will be closing out my fifth case that I've assisted on, and it's been really cool to get to see some of my cases all the way through even though I am only at New Hampshire Legal Assistance for a short time. In my latest case, we were able to get a client's welfare suspension lifted and help them get additional benefits they had previously been unduly denied. It's been an enlightening experience getting to work on a variety of practice areas. When I first entered New Hampshire Legal Assistance, I was primarily interested in domestic violence work. While I still think that is ultimately what I want to do, it's been really useful to see how the different practice areas have so much overlap. Many victims of domestic violence may also be struggling with housing or need benefits in order to make ends meet. By getting trained and taking cases in a variety of these practice areas this summer, I will be better and more knowledgably able to help clients with a broad range of issues they may be facing. I am excited to see what these last two weeks hold as I wrap up my time at New Hampshire Legal Assistance!



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Update 5: Hi everyone, here is my 5th and final update from my time at New Hampshire Legal Assistance. As this summer comes to a wrap, I think back to my first week at New Hampshire Legal Assistance. I felt so overwhelmed—there were so many practice areas to become familiar with and I was the only rising 2L and the only intern not from the New England area. With each new person I met at NHLA though, I felt more at ease. The people working at NHLA are genuinely some of the kindest people I have met, and it is clear everyone is there for the common goal of helping people and making a difference. Every member of the support staff and attorney was so patient as I learned the ropes of each practice area and how I could be most helpful. One thing stuck with me throughout the summer that the executive director said on my first day here: NHLA has to turn away eligible clients whose legal problems we could help with every single week, having summer interns allows that number to go down. It felt so rewarding knowing I was doing my part to help expand NHLA's capacity to serve the community when I assisted attorneys with cases. My favorite part about this work is getting the chance to talk with each individual client and learn their story. We represent a lot of people who don't have anyone else to listen to them, and it is an honor to help give them a voice. Whether it is stopping an eviction, obtaining a domestic violence protective order, or reinstating benefits, it is so rewarding to watch clients get the outcome that they hoped for and deserved. This summer has been such a growing experience for me, and I'm so glad I took the leap and went to New Hampshire Legal Assistance. It has been very affirming that I want to launch a career in public interest law and work for a legal aid post-graduation. I am grateful for the wonderful mentorship from everyone at NHLA as well as Equal Justice America for helping make this work financially possible through their funding.