



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Kimberly Wilson
LAW SCHOOL	University of Illinois College of Law
ORGANIZATION	Legal Aid Chicago

Update 1: Following the conclusion of my first year of law school at the University of Illinois College of Law, an intense but rewarding period of self-reflection and growth, I began interning at Legal Aid Chicago in their Consumer Practice Group as an Equal Justice America Fellow. As the third week of my internship comes to a close, I have thus far worked on several assignments including drafting several legal documents in aid of clients attempting to repay debt as well as clients fighting to keep their homes.

Additionally, I have also been given the opportunity to shadow as well as conduct intake interviews with clients, during which time I advise them of the best course of action given their particular circumstance under the guidance of my supervising attorneys.

Lastly, I have also learnt about the different avenues used for asset protection and debt repayment including Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 Bankruptcy filings. I am very much enjoying my time at Legal Aid Chicago so far and am looking forward to learning more about Consumer Protection issues and the practice of law more broadly. My experience thus far has served to reaffirm my commitment to becoming an attorney and helping my future clients overcome their challenges in a legal capacity.

Update 2: As my internship with Legal Aid Chicago as an Equal Justice America Fellow progresses, I have continued my work on several cases helping clients to resolve their various legal issues.

I have improved my legal research and writing skills while drafting several legal documents including a Motion for Default Judgement for a case involving a dispute over ownership of property. I have also conducted my first solo intake interview during which time I advised my client on their rights, options and responsibilities regarding repayment of credit card debt owed.



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Additionally, I have continued to learn about the ins and outs of Consumer practice through various informative training sessions and have been given the opportunity to learn about the work of other practice groups as well.

I am grateful to Equal Justice America for awarding me this fellowship and look forward to improving my legal advocacy skills further throughout the remainder of my internship.

Update 3: The past two weeks of my internship with Legal Aid Chicago brought with it more opportunities to help clients and improve my legal skills. I have continued my work in the Consumer Practice Group helping clients facing debt collection issues and property disputes. I have also gotten the chance to work on a case in the Pro Bono and Community Partnerships Practice Group helping a client who has been the victim of identity theft.

Additionally, this week I enjoyed participating in a discussion with Legal Aid Chicago's Black Alliance Affinity Group about the importance of diversity in the legal profession as well as how to navigate these spaces as a person of color. These experiences have allowed me to continue to hone my legal research, writing, and analysis skills as well as given me the opportunity to learn about different aspects of both litigation and transactional work.

I feel confident my time as an Equal Justice America Fellow will aid in my decision-making process regarding the area of law I would like to pursue upon earning my law degree from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Update 4: This week marked the end of my internship with Legal Aid Chicago in the Consumer Practice Group! In the last few weeks I have continued to improve my legal research and writing skills as well as connected with like-minded individuals in the public interest legal field. I also had the opportunity to give a final presentation on the memo I wrote on issues surrounding property law.

This internship has been an invaluable experience, and I am very grateful to my attorney supervisors in the Consumer Practice Group and everyone at the organization who graciously donated their time to help me learn and grow. I feel confident I will be able to take the lessons I have learnt with me as I begin my 2L year at the University of Illinois College of Law and continue to embark on my legal career.

I am also eternally grateful to Equal Justice America for awarding me a fellowship which allowed me to pursue this goal.

Update 5: My summer internship with Legal Aid Chicago as an Equal Justice America fellow in the Consumer Practice Group was a rewarding and informative experience. Throughout my internship, I was able to learn about the ins and outs of the consumer protection field such as the requirements and process of filing a Chapter 7 and Chapter 13 bankruptcy. I was also able to conduct several client intake interviews and help multiple clients experiencing challenges with consumer debt and consumer fraud by walking them through the process of requesting hardship requests.



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Additionally, I was able to learn about the ins and outs of other fields such as education law. As someone who has a masters degree in Education and is interested in practicing education law and making education accessible to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, learning about the education law field was a very informative experience. I was even able to complete assignments in another practice group, the Pro Bono and Community Partnerships Practice Group, helping clients through the process of having a fair chance to attain a job by having their criminal records expunged or sealed.

Through these experiences I was able to get a clearer picture of what a career practicing public interest law and legal aid specifically would look like. This experience has thus reaffirmed my commitment to practicing law in order to help those who need access to legal services. I was also able to meet other like-minded individuals along the way and speak with and learn from practicing attorneys. As a first-generation college student with no lawyers in my family, this was my first time working with attorneys at an organization whose primary objective is to provide legal services. To do this at an organization such as Legal Aid Chicago which is dedicated to helping the less fortunate to access legal services made the experience even more gratifying.