



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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<b>LAW SCHOOL</b>	University of Michigan Law School
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Legal Aid Chicago

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**Update 1:** My internship with the Public Benefits division of Legal Aid Chicago began about two weeks ago. The orientation on my first day was wonderful, I met so many amazing attorneys and interns and I learned so much about all the important work that Legal Aid Chicago does for our clients, and the enormous impact that they've had on Chicago's communities.

Since my first day, I've been trained on application & appeals processes for public benefits, and I've gone to so many fun lunch talks with experienced professionals from all of Legal Aid Chicago's practice groups. The major projects that I'll be working on for the rest of the summer are all lined up, and I can't wait to do some great work! I'm so excited to represent the University of Michigan Law School this summer as I pursue my career in public interest!

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**Update 2:** My internship has continued to be a rewarding and educational experience. I've had the privilege of working at the Garfield Community Service Center, performing intake interviews to assist individuals in submitting requests for medical, food and cash benefits. It is incredible to see the impact of my work in helping my neighbors and community get stability and support in their lives.

My work so far at Legal Aid Chicago is very comparable to the kind of direct-client legal service work that I have practiced as a Student Attorney in The University of Michigan Law School's student clinics. I would highly recommend that up & coming law students who are interested in pursuing public interest & legal aid careers try clinic experiences that seem interesting.

I've also been able to attend a myriad of career events and professional development trainings hosted by Legal Aid Chicago and PILI. I've learned about strategies for improving my client interviews, how to pursue post-graduate fellowships, and the immigration crisis currently facing Chicago.



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**Update 3:** My internship continues to be thoroughly informative and inspiring. I've been doing a lot of work on individual client's cases, which I can't discuss at length in this post, but rest assured, Legal Aid Chicago is helping a lot of people with a lot of issues!

Apart from getting the chance to help so many wonderful clients, one of the things I like the most about working for Legal Aid Chicago is that I get the chance to see projects and meet people from all our different practice groups! While I work in Public Benefits, Legal Aid Chicago has provided so many wonderful networking and team-building events amongst our staff, and I've gotten to learn so much about our Housing Practice Group and Legal Aid Chicago's Medical-Legal-Partnership division.

I expect my work here to continue smoothly and productively for my remaining time with this wonderful team, and I sincerely hope to contribute to Legal Aid Chicago's important mission and work in the future too!

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**Update 4:** My internship is nearly complete and has been a wonderfully rewarding and inspiring journey. The work I've gotten to do with individual clients' cases has been the most educational and enjoyable. It is one thing to read statutes and memos or receive trainings on the public benefits programs that Legal Aid Chicago assists with, but to work with people who depend on those resources is to learn so much more about what public assistance is and should be.

In addition to my client work, I've had such a wonderful time getting to learn from and work beside all the talented and friendly people at Legal Aid Chicago. The work culture here is incredibly welcoming and familial, and I couldn't imagine a better group of people to work with every day.

I have hope that the work I've done with Legal Aid Chicago this summer has had a positive impact on many people's lives, and that everyone working at or with this organization will see their goals met and problems surmounted.

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**Update 5:** My Internship with Legal Aid Chicago is now complete. My summer has been filled with so many wonderful mentors, talented peers and meaningful projects with incredible clients. I can't thank Legal Aid Chicago enough for this wonderful opportunity.

The beginning of my internship was very exciting, but also a little nerve-wracking. I am not very good with introductions or networking, and jumping into a new workspace with so many new names and faces was pretty intimidating. But the wonderful people there did so much to make this easier. Natasha Jarrett, the Intern Manager, arranged for so many introductory activities and social events to let all the interns get to know each other and the rest of the staff at Legal Aid Chicago. Trey Daly, the Director of the Public Benefits Practice Group, would frequently start our weekly meetings with a musical prelude (my favorite was Bruce Springsteen) to allow us all to catch our breath and get comfortable. Sal De Los Angeles, my supervisor, would always ask me about my weekends and personal life before we discussed my work for the week. The people at



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Legal Aid Chicago are an incredible, respectful and kind team, and it was a privilege to work with them.

My work at Legal Aid Chicago was also a privilege to contribute to. Through the frequent trainings that staff provided, as well as the on-the-ground casework I completed, I have learned so much about Chicago's Public Benefits Systems, as well as the lives of my Chicago neighbors who rely on those systems. I helped many clients receive food benefits, medical coverage and cash assistance. I have never felt more prepared and energized to engage in public interest legal aid, and to help people seek more stable and comfortable lives. My work with Legal Aid Chicago has been so important to me, that I have decided to pursue a post-grad fellowship hosted by Legal Aid Chicago, with the hope of contributing to their Public Benefits practice group in an even more substantive way.

My time with Legal Aid Chicago has vastly improved my self-organization, interpersonal skills, and research abilities. I can't thank Legal Aid Chicago enough for all they have done to support my professional development and enlighten my career aspirations. I highly encourage all of my peers at the University of Michigan Law School to consider applying to Legal Aid Chicago if you are interested in pursuing Public Interest in the Midwest!