



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

## SUMMER 2024

### EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	Family Law Project – Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM)

**Update 1:** I'm thrilled to be working as an Equal Justice America Fellow for this summer. I started on Monday 5/13 at the Family Law Project in Ypsilanti, MI. FLP is part of the Legal Services of South Central Michigan. This summer, I will be assisting with intake calls, drafting motions, legal research, and learning about the legal process in regard to family law and DV. I'm looking forward to learning more as time goes by, and my supervisors are extremely kind and supportive. Thank you, EJA, for funding this experience!

**Update 2:** It's been just over a month since I started at the Family Law Project, but the time has definitely gone by quickly! Since my last update, I've been able to go on the record as a student attorney for a pro-con hearing, and I've written a lot of my first motions too. I've continued to conduct initial interviews as well and I'm grateful for how much opportunity there is to work with clients. There are so many options in family law that I had no idea were available, like filing a motion for exclusive use of a home. Reading over written samples is also incredibly helpful, my supervisors are really supportive here as well! I'm excited for the remaining weeks of my internship :)

**Update 3:** I have 2 weeks remaining at Family Law Project and am already feeling so sad to leave! Since the last update, I've helped to draft motions for exclusive use, narratives to accompany PPO petitions, and judgements of divorce. I really appreciate how much opportunity there is to work directly with clients here, and my supervising attorneys are all amazingly kind and supportive. Tomorrow, I will be observing a FOC evaluation. Next week, I might be able to go on the record (again!) as a student attorney for a pro-con hearing. It's also been so much fun working with co-interns! We definitely have a dynamic going on and it's great to talk to others about law school and work too. I'm really looking forward to all the work I'll be able to do in the next two weeks. Incredibly grateful for this opportunity!

**Update 4:** I've really enjoyed working at Family Law Project and am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to do so this summer. Recently, I've been working on a PPO narrative and also did a



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pro-con to finalize a divorce. It's amazing to be on the record as a student attorney -- it feels so close to what I want to do for the rest of my life! I hope that the remaining 2 years of law school will continue to help strengthen my skills as a litigator. The staff attorneys here are really kind too. I let them know that I wanted to become a DV prosecutor, and they immediately connected me to one in our local county. It's really encouraging to be able to work in family law during my first summer, since family law and criminal law were the two fields that inspired me to get into law school.

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**Update 5:** Although my time with the Family Law Project was limited to 10 weeks, the experiences that I had as a Summer Law Clerk have been so invaluable and educational. From the very beginning, I was given so many opportunities to learn about the legal process for family courts in Michigan, to interact with clients, and to work with attorneys. The staff attorneys were all so amazingly supportive too, and I could not have asked for a greater experience.

During my first week, my supervisor encouraged me to go on the record as a Student Attorney to handle a Pro Con hearing, or the final hearing in a divorce case. I was nervous and hesitated at first, but she showed me how I would only be reading off a printed sheet of paper and that nothing would have to be changed. She also assured me there was nothing to be scared about, and that the judge was kind to students in her courtroom. I'm really grateful for her encouragement, and I felt comfortable doing another Pro-Con hearing later in the summer.

I'm also grateful for the opportunity to work with clients. Family Law Project is focused on providing legal assistance to low-income survivors of domestic violence (DV), and receives referrals from Safe House, which is a DV shelter in Washtenaw County. Being able to interact with individuals who urgently need legal representation and support in ongoing court cases has been a tremendously rewarding experience. Once a referral is received at Family Law Project, staff (including law clerks) reach out to the client for an interview assessing their legal needs. During these interviews, we learn details of each client's situation, and then have weekly meetings to discuss whether and how we can meet their needs. I have learned about so many different motions which can be filed to support someone and their family during critical situations and/or ongoing legal proceedings. It's incredibly eye-opening to know that there are options for child support, property division, spousal support, etc., where legal counsel can ensure that a victim is properly supported. I was also able to sit in on evaluations where child custody and parenting time schedules were determined, and many hearings to show cause.

Overall, my time with the Family Law Project has helped improve my writing skills, advocacy skills, and client interaction-based skills. I was able to do interviews, attend hearings, assist with drafting motions, and even appear in court as a student attorney. I also received many training sessions on the different areas of family law. I had a wonderful time this summer and learned so much, I am so grateful to Equal Justice America for funding this experience.