



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



NAME	Kiely Johnson
LAW SCHOOL	The George Washington University Law School
ORGANIZATION	Greater Boston Legal Services / Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services

Update 1: So far, my experience working with Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services (an office of Greater Boston Legal Services) has been great. I have already learned so much, and I am really enjoying exploring an area of law that I did not know a lot about. I am working under an attorney who focuses on housing law as well as SSI/SSDI benefits, and I have had the opportunity to work on cases with her in both areas. I have spoken with two clients on the phone multiple times relaying their options and advice from the attorney. I have also been given the opportunity to write a letter of advocacy for a family, which is something I did not get to do in my research and writing class during 1L, so it has been really cool working on it. My favorite part so far has been learning the clients' stories and getting to know them by speaking with them on the phone. I have never done work like this before, and seeing first hand how legal aid works has been awesome. My supervisor has been great about giving me opportunities to have hands-on experience, and I am really grateful for that. I have realized just how important legal aid is. So many people do not know their rights or what they should be entitled to, especially in housing law and with disability benefits, and I love that I am able to be a small part in helping people navigate this.

Update 2: I have learned so much more these past few weeks, and have gotten some really cool opportunities. I was able to shadow an attorney in court for the first time, which was a really interesting experience. I had no idea how much actually happened outside of the court rooms and in the hallways. The attorney I was shadowing was able to settle with the opposing council all without entering a courtroom, which I did not know was even an option. I think experiences like these are really great because you learn how lawyering and legal aid actually works in a hands-on, realistic manner. I also learned how important it is for clients to have an advocate in court, and that is where legal aid is really important. It can be really confusing and hard to understand, and I can see how many people may get taken advantage of or forced into an



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

agreement that they do not want, so this experience showed me just how important having these advocates is in a different way. Additionally, I have gotten my first research opportunity to help with an answer to a motion for summary judgment for a class action lawsuit, and I have been able to continue with writing a letter of advocacy as well. I have also been calling clients every day and interacting with them, which has continued to be really helpful and has made me a lot more confident. It has been good to jump right into completing tasks that may have seemed intimidating at first because I got comfortable with it much more quickly.

Update 3: The last two weeks have continued to be very informative and exciting for me at Greater Boston Legal Services/Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services. I have gotten to work on a number of interesting and new assignments, and I have continued to build relationships with the clients that I have been working with since the beginning of June. I think building relationships with clients has been one of the most rewarding parts of working in legal aid. I often get to talk to them multiple times a week, and it has been really great to build trust with them. Another new assignment that I got to work on was writing another brief letter of advocacy to the SSA for an administrative tolerance waiver, which was something new I got to learn about. I am also hoping to be able to get the opportunity to work on a brief for a client's court date. Though I have written briefs in my research and writing class in school, I have never been able to work on a real one for an actual client that will be utilized in court. I think this will be a really great opportunity to put my research and writing skills that I learned in school into practice.

Update 4: This week, I got the opportunity to work on the brief of a class action case, and that was a really cool experience. We were trying to meet a deadline, and I was helping do all of the citation checks, which I really enjoy doing. Then, being able to read the brief and learn about how class actions work in legal aid was really interesting and valuable. This work can hopefully help a lot of people, and it was very cool to be even a small part of it. Additionally, I have been able to start writing a brief from scratch with the guidance of my supervisor after having done a lot of research for it. I am excited to be able to do a large amount of work for a case to hopefully help someone who needs it, and I do not think that I would have gotten this opportunity had I not been working in legal aid. Lastly, one of the eviction cases I have been working on was dismissed, which was a really great success and experience after having built a relationship with the client for the past month and a half. Overall, this experience has been really rewarding and enlightening, and I am so glad that I got the opportunity to work in legal aid this summer.

Final Reflection: Interning at Greater Boston Legal Services / Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services this summer has been such an amazing experience. I have learned so much about myself as a person and about the community Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services serves overall. Having grown up in Somerville, it was amazing to be a small part of helping my own community and it was really cool to get to know this community in a different and deeper way.



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

I was able to work with so many clients, which was so much more than I was expecting, and I was able to connect with them personally by speaking with many of them on the phone several times. It was great to build relationships with them throughout the summer and be the primary point of contact for many of them. It was actually a lot more responsibility than I was expecting to take on, but it was so rewarding and I am so grateful that I got to do so much. I think it really prepared me more for what lawyering actually looks like and I got a real experience of working in legal aid.

In addition to building relationships with clients, I was also able to do some writing assignments that were really helpful and a great experience. I got to write an entire brief myself for a client struggling with a social security issue, and I got to write a letter of advocacy for a family. Additionally I did a lot of cite checking for my supervisor on a federal case she was working on to help her meet an important deadline. Lastly, I was able to do some research to help with the brief that I cite checked which felt like I was able to contribute to the content of it as well.

Additionally talking with my EJA mentor, Hannah, throughout the summer was so great. She was so helpful and always willing to answer my questions and I'll definitely be keeping in touch with her!

Overall, I was able to do everything I could have wanted in this internship, and I am so grateful for my experience at GBLS / CASLS.