



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	Legal Aid of West Virginia

Update 1: During the first couple of weeks at Legal Aid, I was warmly welcomed to the office and quickly immersed in the experiences that the lawyers navigate in their daily work. I was able to attend initial meetings with incoming clients, listen and make phone calls updating clients about the status of their cases, or scheduling follow-up appointments, and attending in-person hearings on custody matters in court.

During my first in-person meeting with a client, I got to see how different lawyers approach meetings with different mindsets and skill sets. I realized that I want to cultivate my skills to be well-integrated so that I can ensure that I'm covering as much assistance as possible. The client in this meeting was seeking a domestic violence protective order, and when alone, she shared with me that the extent of the violence often left her to exercise a great deal of strength to overcome the dark. Because she has always been assured that the sun rises in the morning, she shared that this is what drove her perseverance; and I shared her sentiments from my own experiences.

Overall, my experiences connecting with coworkers and clients have given me the assurance that I should be pursuing not only a future in public interest, but in family law. I think that the rest of the summer will reinforce my passion for helping women and children specifically.

Update 2: I worked more substantially on the DMV project that I was assigned to help with. I updated the work on the informational booklet that helps the public understand the reinstatement process as well as consequences through the law and DMV administration. Throughout these weeks, I met with the mayor of my town to receive a check for a new housing



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law department at the local office. I also attended my first CLE local bar meeting and was exposed to some local practicing lawyers and informed about the bar requirements and ethics. I got to experience my first outreach event in the community during these weeks and connect with other organizations that help families in the area with varying services.

The first big task outside of my DMV project was assigned by my supervising attorney—my first case. With this, I initiated a conference and put together documents needed to proceed with a custody parenting plan with the family court and serve the opposing party who resides out of state.

I also did research to help support in-office attorneys with their pursuing client questions and learned more about the local workings of the courthouses and procedures to gather information with judges and clerks.

Update 3: Helped my assigned client complete the initial client process while gathering information needed to file a petition to the court to establish custody.

The last couple weeks of work have included most notably learning about Voices for Kids and Guardian Ad Litem work. I also got to meet with a client to begin establishing custody. Both areas of law, and more generally family of law, have become an increasingly desirable path that I'm getting more secure in pursuing after law school. Seeing the effects of quality lawyering by helping guard against unfavorable rulings in future appeals to protect children's interests, and overall navigation of difficult client experiences have all shown me why I'm interested in this delicate line of work.

I've been very grateful for the work that the attorneys in my firm have been giving me. They've helped me draft client emails, findings of facts and conclusions of law, and sit in on valuable client meetings and hearings; all of which have been integral for the health and wellbeing of the clients we have served. These experiences have given me practical insights on how to apply my academic vigor and best serve my community.

Update 4: During these weeks, I worked to complete my summer project final draft. This project was a public facing forum in the form of an informational booklet that served to guide those who are seeking to reinstate their driver's licenses in West Virginia. This includes a comprehensive step-by-step of how to renew licenses for various infractions and various grounds for revocation. During this last week of my internship, I had various meetings with my supervisors to ensure that my final project was the best final product that I could turn in. I also finished helping an attorney review trial footage, notating key moments and judicial declarations within it, and then helped write the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for the proposed



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final order he had been tasked with completing. This project was one of my more fulfilling tasks, as it taught me how to adapt to new situations that a judge may expect and draft accordingly. It also helped me understand how to take preemptive steps to avoid a bad outcome for clients in the event of an appeal.

I also got to do outreach in 4 of the counties that Legal Aid oversees one day; we had posted our services on bulletins in local buildings in each area as well as the courthouses in each county. I also was taken on a tour of the courts in Wood County guided by my mentor at the firm. We saw the magistrate courthouse, the family court, and the circuit court.

Final Reflection: Overall, my experience with Legal Aid helped inform me of areas of law that I may seek to pursue and how the local court system works. We worked with clients that required both time and issue sensitive attention. I got the chance to connect with the community through legal representation and outreach, and the chance to connect with members of the bar. I also got to see the areas where community members organize and where they are legally served.

I saw the importance of clerical filing, the skills it takes to connect with clients in order to serve them, and how working with other lawyers to receive the resources you need can optimize your ability to assist clients. Throughout the internship, I conferred with clients and delivered documents, set up meetings with their attorneys, researched legal topics, and assisted in party negotiations. I also helped an attorney review trial footage, notating key moments and judicial declarations within it, and then helped write the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law for the proposed final order he had been tasked with completing. In tandem with the daily work provided by the attorneys, I also completed my summer project assigned to me from the beginning of my internship. This project was a public facing forum in the form of an informational booklet that served to guide those who are seeking to reinstate their driver's licenses in West Virginia. This included a comprehensive step-by-step of how to renew licenses for various infractions and various grounds for revocation.

Some challenging parts throughout the summer occurred with the more time intensive work. I would feel fatigued doing work that would take more than seven hours at a time or frustrated with ill-tempered clients. But these challenges showed me the importance of patience and the perseverance it will take to keep doing the work that has motivated me to be where I am today. This fellowship has given me the opportunity to learn about underserved areas of law that have called to me from the beginning, and what it takes to achieve a life where I can pursue it.