



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:

Name: Billie DeShone

Law School: Michigan State University College of Law

Fellowship: Legal Services of South Central Michigan, Lansing, MI

Entry 1: 5/31/19

I've now completed my first few weeks at Legal Services! This summer I'm working on Domestic Violence cases with my supervising attorney, doing divorce, custody, PPOs, and more. I'll also be doing Housing Law work on Thursdays through eviction diversion programs in two different counties. It has been a lot of work to get used to but I'm settling in and excited to be spending my summer doing work that can be emotionally taxing at times but so necessary.

I've had the chance to start drafting pleadings, complaints, and motions in addition to attending hearings, client meetings, and conferences with my supervising attorney for a variety of different clients. I'm also looking forward to arguing one of the motions I wrote in a few weeks! I also really enjoy being in court for eviction diversion, I'm very comfortable negotiating with opposing parties to keep people in their house, not just for that day but hopefully for the long-term.

I'm also very grateful that I received a grant from Equal Justice America for the work I'll be doing this summer. They help interns like me all over the country get funding to help with expenses while working for public interest organizations doing work for vulnerable and underserved populations.

Entry 2: 6/28/19

I'm now about halfway through my internship here at Legal Services of South Central Michigan. I was able to go on the record for the first time in a divorce case yesterday and I have three more motions set for hearing next week so I am making great progress in improving my skills here. I'm also excited to say I'm coming back in the fall to work here again for about 15 hours a week while I complete my last year of law school, which is a dream come true.

I have still been drafting pleadings, motions, objections, complaints... you name it, I've probably worked on it! I think my favorite part of the job though is the really hands on work with clients, like negotiating at eviction diversion every Thursday. Negotiations have a big impact on clients in a short amount of time so while



Domestic Violence cases can wear me down at times, negotiating with a landlord to get a Client more time or less money to pay breaks up the emotionally tolling work I do most often.

Entry 3: 7/16/19

We're nearing the end of my internship here at Legal Services of South Central Michigan. I've had the chance to go on the record a number of times in housing and family law cases and I'm really happy with the improvements I have made in my public speaking and writing over this summer.

I think what is most important, however, is the care that the staff attorneys take at this office to combat second-hand trauma. Working with Domestic Violence cases can weigh really heavy on a person, long after you've left the courtroom or the office. But, the office and the attorneys here take care to look out for each other and for interns to help cope with the trauma they've seen. People working in legal aid have a deep passion for helping others but don't always look out for themselves and learning this at an early point in my career has already proven to be very beneficial.

Entry 4: 8/13/19

Hello all this is my final update of the summer. I just finished up my summer internship last week and what a great summer it was. I had the chance to go on the record a number of times in both housing and family law cases, wrote a couple incredible briefs we filed in our cases, and got to work with attorneys that served as great role models and mentors for me. I was lucky enough to be asked to come back in the fall as a law clerk working part time during the school year and I'm very excited to continue on this path toward becoming a public interest attorney.