



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Scott Jorgenson

**Law School:** University of Virginia School of Law

**Fellowship:** Legal Aid of Nebraska

---

### Entry 1: June 10, 2019

This summer, I am fortunate to have been selected as one of this year's Equal Justice America Fellows. As a part of this fellowship, I get to give you all updates of the work I am doing this summer. I am just beginning my third week working in Omaha with Legal Aid of Nebraska and have quickly been exposed to and helped with numerous types of cases and client issues. In my first two weeks as a law clerk at Legal Aid, I have helped clients file for bankruptcy, scheduled and attended a meeting about Social Security benefits, drafted a document to transfer title in a mobile home, translated documents into Spanish (and made some client phone calls in Spanish for a supervising attorney), attended trials and hearings, conducted research for pending cases and initiatives, and helped with client intake with Legal Aid's Access to Justice walk-in legal clinics. It has been a busy two weeks and I continue to learn every day!

---

### Entry 2: July 4, 2019

Happy 4th of July! On a day where we celebrate our independence and remember Thomas Jefferson's famous words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness," here's a quick update of what I have been up to recently as an Equal Justice America Fellow at Legal Aid of Nebraska in Omaha, working to help provide equal access to justice for all. While I continue to get a wide range of experience with Legal Aid and have been involved in numerous long and short-term projects, one story of one client from the past few weeks helps to highlight the important work Legal Aid performs for people who could not otherwise afford legal assistance.



Since my last update I helped research and write a brief that I was later able to watch the arguments for in State District Court on an appeals case. The case involved a client who had solicited bids for construction of a tiny house mounted on a trailer that she was planning to take across the country so she could be closer to, and take care of, her elderly mother. After pouring all of her savings into the project, the end product was done poorly, not according to the blueprints of the plan, and would be able to be moved to her mother's due to its construction. After contacting other contractors about what it would cost to fix, they informed her that she needed to start the project over given its poor construction, something she no longer had the money to do. The original contractor argued that he should collect the entire price of the contract while our arguments were that the construction was not done in a workmanlike manner and that the finished product was not what was contracted for. Although the decision from the court is still pending, after the appeal we received a nice email from the client stating what our efforts meant to her, win or lose. She said that she had been jaded by the justice system before the appeal in District Court, given the decision against her in the lower court and some of her past experiences, but that our efforts at Legal Aid on her behalf had helped to restore her faith in the system and in people wanting to make sure everyone has equal access to justice.

---

### **Entry 3: July 26, 2019**

As I near the end of my time as a summer law clerk as an Equal Justice America Fellow at Legal Aid of Nebraska, here's a quick update. I've continued to get exposure to a wide variety of cases and areas of the law over the past few weeks and have done everything from attending court hearings and trials, drafting pleadings and motions, conducting research for cases, and working on statistical and more policy-oriented research.

Perhaps the best example of Legal Aid helping to make a difference in people's lives from the past couple of weeks comes from a Social Security appeals hearing I attended with an attorney. Our client, who was the victim of a home invasion a few years ago that left his wife dead and himself severely injured from gunshot wounds was recently denied a continuation of his Social Security disability benefits. After recovering from his wounds, the client was left with only 11 inches of intestine after 23 feet had to be removed. Because of this, it is extremely difficult for him to get all of the nutrients his body needs. Before the home invasion, he had worked his entire adult life and had his own business, and he would like to work again someday. However, the physical and mental difficulties posed by his situation make it so he cannot exert himself for long periods of time without needing breaks, rest, etc. Unable to afford a private attorney, luckily Legal Aid was able to be there and help represent him at his hearing as he continues to recover from this traumatic experience. The result of the hearing is not known yet, but the hearing officer seemed to indicate that he would be able to continue receiving disability benefits. It is cases like this client's that help to highlight the important work that organizations like Legal Aid of Nebraska do in making a real difference in people's lives.



## **Entry 4: August 2, 2019**

Today is my last day as a summer law clerk and @Equal Justice America Fellow at Legal Aid of Nebraska, and this is my final update for the summer. As I reflect back on all that I have learned and done this summer, I am thankful to have had the opportunity to get to work with Legal Aid. From the beginning I was given a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities and able to participate in, observe, and contribute to numerous cases and projects. Substantively my knowledge of the law in the areas of housing, family, employment, banking, Social Security, and Medicaid has grown exponentially. More importantly, I have been able to witness and experience first-hand the impact Legal Aid of Nebraska has on people's lives every day. Whether it is a client saying that Legal Aid has restored their faith in the justice system, knowing that you helped a family keep their home, or insuring that someone is able to remain on Social Security as they recover from their injuries, Legal Aid, and organizations like it, truly make a difference in people's lives and help to insure that all people have access to the justice system. In order to support organizations like Legal Aid of Nebraska, please consider donating to Equal Justice America so that my work, and the work of my peers, may continue.