



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:

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**Law School:** Chicago-Kent College of Law

**Fellowship:** Domestic Violence Legal Clinic

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### Entry 1:

I have officially completed my first two weeks at the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic (DVLC). Like my first semester of law school, it has been a very steep learning curve. At DVLC, I split my time between working at the courthouse and then at the extended services office with the family law division. At the courthouse, I assist people in obtaining orders of protection. At the extended services office, I draft divorce documents and shadow my supervising attorneys when they go to court. On my first day, I witnessed a prove-up which was not planned for that day, something that is very rare. What I love most about my work is that I am in court every day, whether it is at the Daley Center or 555 W. Harrison. I am working directly with clients and then witnessing the results of my work when the judge issues a decision. I am thinking that I definitely want to do litigation work when I am an attorney. Excited to see what work I do as I learn more!

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### Entry 2:

I have now been working at DVLC for one month! I am still learning so much. With the OP division, I have now learned how the office works a bit more. Specifically, I have learned that it is important to stay flexible and maintain an open mind. It is impossible to predict what the day will be like, such as how long I'll wait with my client to go to court, or what decision the judge will issue. At the family law division, I have started doing more research, which surprisingly I really enjoy! I have researched topics such as bankruptcy and child support to the legal rights of fathers who sign VAPs. I am learning topics I would never get the chance to learn at school. I am excited I still have about 6 more weeks to go!

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### Entry 3:

I am a little over halfway through my internship. I am way more comfortable as an intern than I was in the first couple of weeks. DVLC has actually changed its name to "Ascend Justice," and we have merged with the family defense center. What I love about Ascend Justice is the holistic approach it takes to working with clients. Many areas of the law overlap, and clients who use our services to obtain an order of protection can apply for family law or immigration services at our extended services office. Currently,



I am researching how Illinois enforces foreign divorces. I have also learned how to calculate child support and draft parenting plans. There is more that goes into filing for a dissolution of marriage than I thought, especially when the parties have children in common. It is crucial that low-income clients can use our services, especially when they are victims of domestic abuse. Many clients are extremely grateful for the work we provide, and I have been here long enough that I am now seeing the same clients and following their cases more.

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**Entry 4:**

I am in my 9th week at my internship with Ascend Justice (DVLC)! It is CRAZY how many people I interact with on a daily basis. When I am working in the order of protection clinic, I at least work with one client during the day. I have gained enough experience to work on a client's case from start to finish, completely on my own. Working at the clinic has given me patience, because often clients' cases are not as simple as "I want an order of protection against this person for these three reasons." Usually, the issues are convoluted and overlapping, and the client will be very overwhelmed. I have learned to have patience to understand when a client might need more time to understand their current situation. I have also learned to move at a pace that fits with my client. Before this internship, I always moved at the most efficient pace I could manage. However, now I have learned it is important to slow down. Because clients are coming into the clinic at one of the most stressful times in their life, it is crucial to ensure they are comfortable and understand the process.

My knowledge of family law has also doubled. When I observe court, I understand all of what is being said between attorneys and when they step in front of the judge (compared to my first weeks at Ascend Justice, when I did not know most of the terminology used in family law cases!) Observing court has also taught me how to interact in front of a judge, as well as the proper way to communicate with other attorneys. In the beginning of this internship, I had little knowledge about the way to utilize the law I learned in my classes. School only teaches you to read, write, and think, but it is not until you are in court that you truly understand how to tie it all together.