



## Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:



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**Law School:** The University of Chicago

**Fellowship:** The Harvard Legal Aid Bureau

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### Entry 1: 6/17/2019

The past two weeks have been a whirlwind as I've gotten settled at the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. Since my law school is on a quarter system, I started two weeks later than my peers, and spent the first days diving into my caseload, the Bureau's system, and life at the office.

Since I am working in the Family Law Division, most of my cases deal, at least tangentially, with domestic violence. It's a privilege to advocate for those who have had their voices silenced consistently and violently in their own homes, which should be places of safety. Last Friday, I stood before a judge for the first time, speaking on behalf of my client. While much of the work of the law can seem like mountains of paperwork, they lead to moments like these: chances to liberate others so that they can move on to a life where they have control and agency in what happens to them and their children.

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### Entry 2: 7/1/2019

Checking in on my first day of trial! I asked to join a team of student attorneys working on a Hague Abduction Convention case, defending a parent who fled an abuser in home country with her children. Coming on the case late has been a whirlwind, but we are ready to go. Witnesses are prepped. Trial binders are made. Exhibits are copied. The rules of evidence have been reviewed, and re-reviewed, and re-reviewed. This will be my first time going to trial, and while I'm excited to stand up in federal court, it's a very high-stakes first trial. I'm honored by the opportunity to have a significant role in a decision that will be life-changing for this family.



**Entry 3: 7/15/2019**

Trial is yet to come to a close, as the judge scheduled us for an additional day of closing arguments, followed by another hearing on remedies next week. The emotional weight of this trial is heavy, particularly as the process has extended much longer than we expected. But I am learning how to counsel my client well, in addition to how to be a good advocate. Half of our first day of trial was spent struggling with technology to get in witnesses who were remote, but eventually we succeeded in having three of our four remote witnesses testify.

Meanwhile, my other cases are continuing on. This week, I have three court dates: a status hearing, a temporary restraining order review, and a motions hearing. As busy as it has been, I'm glad to get such a wide range of experience this summer, and to work with clients from such diverse backgrounds.

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**Entry 4: 7/31/2019**

One final update as I wind down my internship here at Harvard Legal Aid! Trial has come to a close, and we are now moving into drafting interim agreements while we wait for the final decision.

Through this internship, I've appeared in state Probate and Family Court, trial court (for a restraining order proceeding), and federal court. I have stood up in trial, filed motions, counseled tearful clients, and tracked down information that we didn't think we could find. I've pored through pages of records for discovery, and taken care to keep clients' information confidential.

Overall, I've learned the importance of each client--no matter their situation or personality--having the dignity of being well-represented. Of having their story told in a truthful and compelling manner, and of being able to rely on their advocate. I'm grateful for the chance to learn these things through real lawyering, and will miss it as I close out my cases next week.