



Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Abigail Blaker

Law School: Emory University School of Law

Organization: Atlanta Legal Aid

Week of June 15th

I am absolutely honored to have been selected as an Equal Justice America Fellow for my summer internship with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, where I provide legal assistance to low-income people.

Today marks a month of my working in the ALAS Family Law Unit and my first EJA Fellow Update! In the past month I have helped people separate from their abusers, secured child custody and support for wonderful parents and helped to break down economic barriers to justice for all of my clients. This is some of the most meaningful work I have done, and I am so grateful to do it alongside the amazing people of ALAS.

Now and always, it is important to reflect on the systems we live under and how they shape our communities. Access to the legal justice system should not be predicated on an ability to pay. As an Emory University School of Law student, I am proud to serve my community in minimizing that injustice in every way I can. It is necessary for us to break down the systems responsible for creating racial and economic injustice, but also to minimize the immediate harms experienced by those who are still forced to operate in those systems in the present.

Week of July 6th

I have been an Equal Justice America Fellow in my internship with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society for almost two months now and it's time for my second EJA Fellow Update!

For many in Legal Aid, COVID-19 has not decreased our workload but raised it. Within my family law unit, our focus on aiding victims of domestic violence has become especially pressing, as many are trapped in homes with their abusers. Despite an increased workload and heightened stakes for our



cases, my unit has confronted the uncertainty of virtual legal practice with creativity and energy.

With the shift to virtual practice we have been able to better assist those who have difficulty attending in-person proceedings due to economic barriers like securing childcare or having to miss work. We have viewed this moment as an opportunity to improve our process to more compassionately represent our clients.

I am so proud to work at an organization like ALAS where clients are genuinely cared for and tirelessly represent no matter the circumstances, regardless of their ability to pay. I would like to again thank EJA, it is truly a privilege to be able to work in Legal Aid, and their fellowship helped to make it a reality for me.

Week of July 27th

As my internship with Atlanta Legal Aid Society draws to a close, I want to again thank Equal Justice America for supporting me in my public interest work this summer. Legal Aid is a necessary and under-supported service even in the best of times, and in the COVID-19 era the need for legal aid is only growing as low-income populations are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

I am endlessly grateful to have been able to spend my summer working in public interest with the incredible attorneys of the Atlanta Legal Aid DR unit! Despite being entirely virtual, I was able to work on a number of cases and learn an incredible amount from the unit. As my internship ends, I am excited to become a volunteer with this incredible organization while I continue my education at Emory University School of Law.

Week of August 10th

It was an honor to serve as an Equal Justice America Fellow in my summer internship with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society. As COVID-19 continues to disproportionately effect low-income populations, the need for Legal Aid work only grows. I am so proud to have spent my summer at an organization like ALAS where clients are genuinely cared for and tirelessly represent no matter the circumstances, or their ability to pay.

I am incredibly grateful to the attorneys of the Domestic Relations Unit for all they did to make my summer experience rewarding and educational. Despite the unique uncertainty of this summer, they brought energy and creativity to every case we faced and fought tirelessly for our clients.