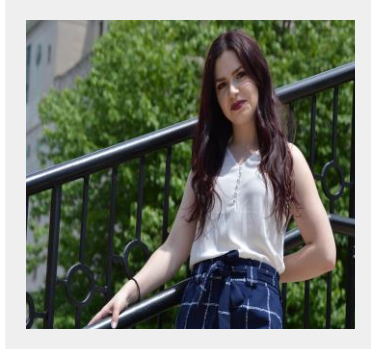




Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Jamie VandenOever

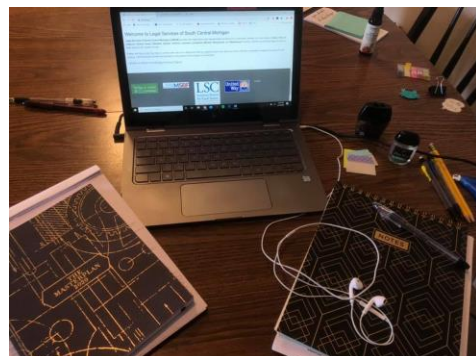
Law School: Michigan State University

Organization: Legal Services of South Central Michigan

Week of June 15th:

Yesterday marked the day that I have been working with Legal Services of South Central Michigan as a Law Clerk for one month. LSSCM works with individuals who face substantial financial and socioeconomic barriers in getting their civil needs met, and provide them with free legal advice and services to give individuals the opportunity for justice. The amount of Americans that face financial and socioeconomic barriers in this country is vast- and many Americans that currently face poverty are unable to navigate services that are supposed to help them. My work with LSSCM, and as an Equal Justice America 2020 Fellow, involves spending my days this summer working to see that the civil needs of every American can be met. As much as 80% of the civil needs of those facing poverty are not met (as seen in a study by the ABA). That needs to change.

While I have my desk set up today as though I am logging into the office, I am instead working to learn about the societal and systemic changes that need to be made during my office's observance of Juneteenth. Today is to celebrate the opportunity of freedom to those who were held as slaves in Texas, the last state to receive the order to enforce the 13th Amendment, in 1865: two years after the 13th Amendment was signed. It was the opportunity of freedom to Black Americans, but yet today we still need to fight for racial justice to be truly actualized and granted. Ensuring the rights of all Americans should not be radical, and I encourage you to learn more about what you can do to make it happen with me today.





Week of July 6th:

Time for an EJA Fellow Update! Through Equal Justice America and their generosity, I am acting as an Equal Justice America Fellow with Legal Services of South Central Michigan.

Working during a global pandemic is more than just experience working in the field of law- it is also working in the field of public health. The clients I serve are people that face socioeconomic barriers: the population hit hardest during COVID-19. Even though I work remotely online, my experiences in life taught me to care for the whole person- not just what I see on my computer screen. I write letters, send emails, and make phone calls to utilize the power of connection we have created to keep our community and our clients close while geographically distant. While I continue to work through Zoom meetings, conferences, webinars, emails, and (even more!) phone calls, I hope that the community we serve in South Central Michigan can feel more at ease knowing someone is looking out for and advocating for them every step of the way- even if it is from home.

If you would like to donate to help more fellows like me and to help more people get the legal help they deserves, consider donating.

Week of July 27th:

Another platform, another EJA Fellow Update! It has been a crazy time this summer, but crazy times provide for the best hands-on learning!! So thankful for Equal Justice America graciously made me a fellow this Summer!

Week of August 10th:

Can you believe the summer is over already? In my last EJA Fellow Update I want to thank LSSCM and EJA for the opportunity of my summer internship during a pivotal time in the legal community. Please consider donating to help others do the same.