



Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Hannah Friedman

Law School: University of Michigan Law School

Organization: Legal Services of Northern Virginia

Week of June 15th:

Hello everyone! This summer, I have the privilege of working as a Law Clerk at Legal Services of Northern Virginia with the added honor of having a Fellowship from Equal Justice America. I am so grateful to have this opportunity despite the pandemic.

Civil Legal Aid is so important, and I really feel like I have found my calling. So far, I have been working on custody and visitation for victims of human trafficking, evictions, and expungements. I am also taking advantage of the amazing series of webinars hosted by the Virginia Poverty Law Center on recent developments in Virginia law!

Something I love about Legal Services of Northern Virginia is their effort toward a more holistic approach. This summer, the Law Clerks are starting to do Legal Checkups where we call current clients to see what other legal issues we might be able to assist them with. So often, our clients are not just facing one legal barrier.

I am excited to continue learning about different areas of the law and connecting with clients on a personal level.

Week of July 6th:

This summer in legal aid is different. Though my work is not what I had expected, I have still found meaningful opportunities to help make an impact.

I have had the honor of joining a small team of passionate employees working to push Legal Services of Northern Virginia forward. Legal aid organizations have a responsibility to the marginalized communities they serve and their employees to actively combat systems of oppression. What I really appreciate about this group is the intense honesty as well as the focus on action. These are my people: direct, proactive, and action oriented. They are willing to openly name harms and unwilling to accept excuses. I am not sure that I would find this kind of group outside of the legal aid context. I am inspired by the



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tenacity of the group and humbled to understand that racism exists everywhere, even in non-profit organizations with the most admirable missions.

I have struggled with the legal path I want to pursue. I want to tackle discrimination and fight for racial justice. I also love the legal aid model. It is empowering to know that they are not mutually exclusive.

Week of July 27th:

Tomorrow is my last day at Legal Services of Northern Virginia. I will forever be grateful that this amazing organization was able and willing to transition our summer clerkship online. Covid-19 has forced the legal services community to confront questions surrounding the logistics of fighting for legal justice. Perhaps, this pandemic will give rise to some new innovations aimed at making our legal system more accessible and equitable.

I am proud to announce that my co-counsel, Nabila Alam, and I won our "Tiger King"-themed mock trial. It was a great experience and I learned a lot - mostly that big risks pay off! And I'll admit that it was even kind of fun, though the preparation was a tad stressful.

I hope to remain connected with all the wonderful people I've met this summer. Congratulations to my mentor, Vincent Smith, on his new Poverty Law Clinic at George Mason University - Antonin Scalia Law School!

Week of August 10th:

One final #EJAFellowUpdate. I am so thankful to Legal Services of Northern Virginia. Despite our remote circumstances, I was able to learn a lot. My passion for direct service was confirmed and I am really excited for a future career in legal aid. No client should be turned away due to an inability to pay - or even because their case may not prove profitable. Justice for all means access to free legal services for all.

I am looking forward to externing at Legal Services of South Central Michigan with the Family Law Project this semester where I'll be able to focus in on serving survivors of domestic violence.

I have an awesome semester of classes where I'll be able to learn more about public interest law. I'll be taking a class called Crimes Against Vulnerable Communities as well as a class on Civil Rights Litigation!

Though it will mostly be online, I cannot wait for this semester to begin!