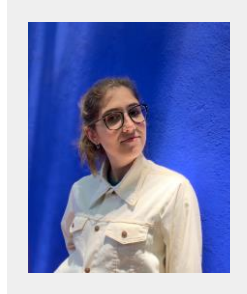




Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



Name: Avery Katz

Law School: University of Minnesota Law School

Organization: Legal Aid Society

Week of June 15th

My first week at Legal Aid Society started amongst a global uprising for systemic change and racial equality. I am grateful to be working for a public interest legal organization that supports diverse communities during this difficult time. Thanks to the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I have been able to work with attorneys at Legal Aid Society who give cost-free legal representation. The Family & Safety Practices group focuses on representing domestic violence survivors in family law cases. Despite navigating litigation during a global pandemic, I have worked on marriage separation agreements and allocation judgments to help women in domestic violence relationships separate from their partners. I also attended my first Prove-up Hearing via Zoom. I'm grateful to work with an organization that advocates for change in the legal system.

Please consider supporting Equal Justice America.

Week of July 6th

The past few weeks have been energizing working alongside the incredible attorneys at Legal Aid Society. Between communicating with clients and attending Prove-Up Hearings over Zoom, I learned how to calculate child support for a marriage separation agreement. Last week I had my first experience calling a client. Together, we reviewed her parenting agreement and discussed life in Chicago. It is conversations like these that make me feel more connected to clients using Metropolitan Family Services despite the physical distance created by working remotely.

Additionally, I have been given the opportunity to review more of the technical legal aspects of this field, such as the rules for notifying an adverse party, merging orders of protection, and determining when to file for default. This has been incredibly helpful in teaching me the inner workings of the law.



Overall, I am so proud to be working with an organization that prioritizes legal representation for people with low income. Legal Aid Society's clients face systemic oppression in more ways than one, and in the face of uprisings in response to George Floyd's murder, I am grateful to be working with an organization that advocates for individual rights and freedoms.

Week of July 27th

I cannot believe how quickly this summer has flown by. Despite working remotely, Legal Aid Society at Metropolitan Family Services has continued to make this internship engaging and I have learned much about the Family Law court system. Upon reflection, I realized how far I've come and how much I have learned in such a short period of time. When I began my internship, I had never heard of Legal Server before and did not have any exposure to working with legal documents. Now, as I navigate the LAS client file system, I know where to find specific client information, how to complete Prove-Up documents for a hearing, and the specific order in which these documents are filed. Most recently I was assigned to two additional clients in order to complete their Publication and Prove-Up documents. A Publication occurs when the adverse party cannot be found, so a newspaper posting is used to notify the person that a lawsuit exists. However, to be granted Publication the client must state that they have tried multiple methods to contact the other person. I have learned how to prepare these documents, send them to clients and communicate with clients about next steps.

While this summer has been anything but predictable in the wake of COVID-19, I'm grateful for the opportunity to apply my academic knowledge to tangible legal situations. I'm thankful to be learning from the incredible legal mentors at LAS as well as the 2Ls/3Ls that are also interning.

Week August 10th

In the last weeks of my internship at Legal Aid Society through Metropolitan Family Services, I have reflected on how the work I've done has impacted client's livelihoods. Learning to explain legal documents to clients, discussing next steps in a case, and working through financial documents has taught me to be more effective with my communication and better understand legal material. I've also been proud of my growth this summer. While at the beginning of the internship each task puzzled me with the technicalities and legal jargon, eventually the various acronyms (AP, OP, 13.3, PDM, and MSA to name a few) and court processes became a part of my daily routine.

Although I am disappointed I could not spend the summer in Chicago, I am thankful for the opportunity to work with Metropolitan Family Services and will hopefully get to connect with them in Chicago in the future. I'm looking forward to utilizing all of my newfound skills at my clinic in the fall — if I'm lucky, my summer experience might give me a head start in my Family Law class!