



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1:

As some of you may know, I have been working with the Domestic Violence/Family Law Unit at Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia for the past 3 weeks, and it has truly been a learning experience. I have gone through trainings, spoken with clients, sat in on a trial, and have overall learned so much about family law. It has definitely opened my eyes to the different experiences people go through, and how unbelievably strong people are. I have also been researching topics like adoption and paternity issues, and I have realized how vast family law issues can be and how many people are impacted by these issues.

One standout moment for me so far was talking to a potential witness for one of our client's cases and having the privilege to listen to their story. The pain and suffering they went through, their willingness to help our client, and their tenacity to retell their story throughout this process was truly admirable. I am excited to see what else this internship has in store for me and helping out this community who need and deserve our legal services.

Update 2:

It's hard to believe I have already spent a whole month my internship with Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. Each day, I am constantly remind of how important public interest work is and how amazingly strong our clients are. Since my last update, I have gotten to conduct more intakes, sit in on hearings, and draft potential questions for the hearings. I have gained so much legal experience that I know will help me in my future career of helping survivors. I have also continued researching topics like paternity disestablishment issues. This research has further opened my eyes on how laws, DC laws in particular harmfully affect a vast majority of people, specifically communities of color. Majority of our client profile is people of color who are dealing with severe problems and need help. Legislation in family law is further evidence that there are systemic issues that negatively affect low-income people of color in our court system.

One standout moment for me so far this week has been compiling and taking notes on text messages an opposing party sent to our client. I will always be in awe of how much our clients go through, the strength they have to get help, and to sit in a virtual courtroom. The lives of these survivors is truly remarkable, and I am glad I get to be a part of such an amazing team that is dedicated to providing our clients with the legal help that they deserve.



Update 3:

This is my penultimate EJA Fellow Update, and I can't believe my internship with Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia will be over in less than a month. I'm grateful for the work I've gotten to do this month. I have had the privilege to talk to many different DV clients about their issues and learn about their incredible lives. This month I have also worked on more research assignments, such as child support issues and the criteria for a "change in circumstances" modification. One interesting research assignment was exploring whether a court can mandate or force an individual to follow an agreement made under religious law. It has been super enlightening and amazing to use the research skills I learned in my 1L classes to real-world situations.

I am excited to continue helping out such a strong and brave community, and to see what else this internship has in store for me in these next few weeks.

Entry 4:

Tomorrow is my last day at Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia; this experience has truly flown by. I'm so grateful and appreciative of the work I got to do over this summer. From listening in on virtual hearings, conducting hour-long intakes, reviewing police reports, and doing so much legal research, my knowledge of family law has grown so much.

My biggest takeaway has been seeing how different individuals are impacted from family law issues. When you're assisting in a domestic violence or custody case, you get to see first-hand that it's not just the two parties on the docket case name, but it's their whole families that are part of this case. It's their kids, their parents, their friends that are impacted too. I've gotten the chance to really see how survivors are helped in the legal process, from the intake to the results of the hearing. I'd also like to quickly thank my supervisors and the other attorneys on the Domestic Violence/Family Law Unit who do such incredible work and taught me so much about this legal area.

I am so thankful for this internship for teaching me so much about the world of family law and domestic violence. I hope to continue supporting this amazing community throughout my legal career.

Equal Justice America helps those like me work for such incredible organizations and fund this experience. Please consider supporting Equal Justice America: <https://www.classy.org/.../eja-2021-fellows.../c320940>