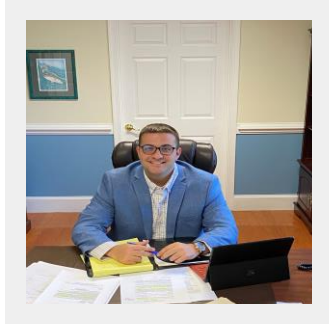




## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Tyler Buchholz

**Law School:** Catholic University of America,  
Columbus School of Law

**Organization:** Blue Ridge Legal Services

---

### Update 1:

As many of you know, I have spent the last year taking my first step towards becoming a lawyer, by completing my first year of law school at The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. This summer, I have been given my first opportunity to practice the skills that I learned by working as a law clerk at Blue Ridge Legal Services. In conjunction with my time at Blue Ridge, I have been accepted as an Equal Justice America Fellow. Equal Justice America works to provide opportunities for lawyers, and law students, to work with organizations that deliver civil legal aid services. While there is a Constitutional right to an attorney in criminal proceedings, there are no Constitutional rights to representation in civil proceedings, and there are certainly no economic guarantees to counsel. According to the American Bar Association, 80% of the civil legal needs of the poor are not being met. As part of my time with EJA, I will be posting a few of these updates to help bring light to the importance of legal aid and to share some of the rewarding experiences that I have.

I can't believe I am already one month into working with Blue Ridge. It has already been very rewarding, having the opportunity to help members of the Harrisonburg, Virginia community who have no one else to turn to when they are facing consumer disputes, eviction, or family disputes such as divorce or domestic abuse. I am honored to be able to give back to the Harrisonburg community that embraced me while I was at James Madison University. Again, I would like to thank Equal Justice America for this opportunity and look forward to the rest of my time at Blue Ridge.

---

### Update 2:

In addition to relaxing and enjoying the long weekend for the Fourth of July, I took time to reflect and appreciate all the opportunities that I have had and the things that I still want to accomplish moving forward.

As I was reflecting on my time with Blue Ridge and thinking about what I wanted to speak about in my second EJA Fellow update of the summer, my mind kept going back to a conversation I had a little over a week



# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

LEGAL SERVICES FELLOWSHIPS

ago. I was speaking with my client about her case and after explaining the next steps we would take in the processes she began to thank me for my work and told me how she appreciated me (and Blue Ridge as a whole) being there to help her with her case. Even after we discussed her case, she went on to talk about the other challenges she is facing in her life and listening to her speak about her struggles beyond just the legal issue we were addressing made me take a step back and reflect on not only my time working with Blue Ridge, but about a career in the law in general. For me, it was part of my job to help her with her legal issue, but to her, it was part of her life and well-being which she trusted us with. It made me realize, after a year of getting fictitious fact patters for writing assignments and tests, that it's possible to forget that there are real people on the other side of the assignments—people who have issues that extend beyond the legal problems that you are helping with. You can forget the impact that you have on people's lives. Throughout the summer, after speaking with my clients and hearing their stories, it reminded me how big of a responsibility a legal career is, and that reminder and the appreciation our client showed us for our work has fueled me to work even harder during my internship this summer and next year in classes.

As we concluded our celebration of our founding father's decision to strive for a more perfect union and their decision to declare independence and establish a government that derived its power from its citizens, I challenge everyone to take a step back and think about what steps they can begin to take to support causes they are passionate about. For me, one of the causes I am passionate about is addressing the need for legal services and I hope that these posts not only raise awareness to that issue but inspires others to reflect on what causes they are passionate about and what steps they can take to further those causes.

---

### **Update 3:**

This is my final EJA Fellow update for the summer. With classes getting ready to start up for the fall, I am taking the time to reflect on the work that I did this summer as a summer law clerk at Blue Ridge Legal Services and as an equal justice fellow. The work that I did this summer was very rewarding and allowed me to apply my legal training from Catholic University to real-world cases and make an impact on client's lives. I would highly recommend the EJA fellowship and/or Blue Ridge Legal Services to any law student looking to do meaningful and impactful work. Should anyone have questions about my work or my experience as an EJA fellow or my work with Blue Ridge, I would encourage them to reach out to me as I have only great things to say about both organizations.