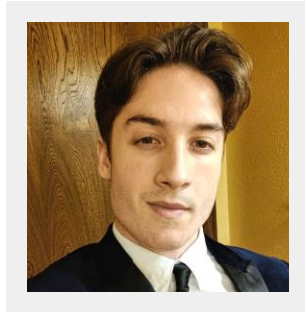




Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: Jacob DeBuse

Law School: Cornell

Organization: LawNY

Update 1:

Just completed my first few weeks as an intern at LawNY. Aside from my fantastic supervisor, I've been fortunate enough to spend my time assisting underemployed and unemployed clients with their divorce paperwork.

Every time I open a new file I'm introduced to a small part of someone's life that I wouldn't have otherwise gotten to be a part of and while the circumstances are unfortunate, I'm proud to play my part in helping them get the legal assistance they need, regardless of their financial situation.

Update 2:

Having completed half of my @EqualJusticeAmerica fellowship and half of my summer internship at the Legal Assistance of Western New York respectively, I find myself reflecting on the lessons I've learned so far. I don't think that I initially realized how big of a role some of these legal assistance programs play in the lives of those they're able to help. However, during our weekly staff meetings I've had a chance to hear some of the stories surrounding the clients we help, and I've been able to talk to experienced family law attorneys who have provided their own insight, and I've come to understand that many of the people reaching out to us really had no one else to help them.

The assistance they were provided with made a huge difference in their lives and I'm grateful to play a part in that. Most of them have had a pretty rough go of it from the start and I'm glad they have an organization they can rely on that sees them as a person deserving of aid.



Update 3:

As I near the end of my summer internship I'm reminded of why I initially sought out my position at LawNY. I had the chance to speak at length with a client this past week and while we began by simply discussing some documents sent to her by a debt collector, it became clear that the implications of those documents troubled her immensely. She was terrified at the thought of losing her apartment, being unable to provide for her newborn child, or any number of added concerns I wasn't privy to. Fortunately, I was able to spend some time addressing what concerns I could (from my admittedly limited capacity) so that by the time we concluded, she felt like there was at least some hope. By no means was I able to solve all her problems, but I believe that I was at least able to remove some of the ambiguity surrounding her situation and by extension, allay some of her fears.

Without organizations like LawNY or Equal Justice America many people in similar situations would go unassisted.

Entry 4:

Having completed my internship at LawNY and incidentally my Equal Justice America Fellowship, I am able to reflect back on my experience this summer as a whole. While often atypical due to the constraints of remote participation, I found my work this summer to be genuinely enlightening. I was introduced to a side of legal work that I hadn't yet encountered in school, (namely the human element). My interactions with clients as well as coworkers allowed me to gain a better understanding of both those who choose to practice law, and those who look to it for recourse or recompense. This semester, I will take back a better understanding of how my actions in this field can affect others and how seemingly abstract concepts can truly impact the real world.