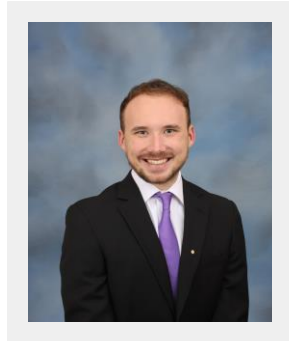




Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: Jack Petr

Law School: The George Washington University

Organization: Legal Aid Chicago

Update 1:

As we come to the close of this Father's Day weekend, I would like to take this time to provide my first EJA Fellow update ! I was generously selected as one of this year's Equal Justice America Fellows, and I am currently working in Chicago with Legal Aid Chicago. At this point, I am about a month into my work with Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice group and have loved my time working here. In my time here so far, I have gained hands on experience through legal research, client outreach, and document preparation, and have also had the opportunity to attend advocacy and training events and view court hearings. Thus far, I have learned quite a bit about housing law and housing benefit programs, and I look forward to learning more as the summer progresses. And while the experience I am getting is outstanding, the beneficial and important work that Legal Aid Chicago and the Housing Practice Group do for clients is even more outstanding. I am proud to do my part in assisting in that work!

Update 2:

I hope all are enjoying their Fourth of July weekends, and it is time for my second EJA Fellow update ! In the two weeks since my last update, I have continued to gain valuable experiences in my work with Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group. Housing is a basic need, and as eviction moratoriums are scheduled to be lifted across the country, in the coming weeks and months many living in poverty facing evictions will be in desperate need of legal assistance. In the face of this daunting challenge, the hard work and dedication of the Housing Practice Group at Legal Aid Chicago to help clients hold on to housing vouchers, retain access to their homes, and address serious housing conditions issues has been inspirational to me. To be able to contribute to the efforts of the HPG in some way through the work I have conducted thus far and will continue to conduct to the end of my time here for the summer is an honor. In my time here I have also had the privilege of meeting and working with clients whose capacity for patience and kindness in the face of incredibly stressful situations has amazed me. To conduct work aimed at addressing the serious issues these clients are facing has equally been an honor.



Update 3:

Time has flown by this summer, and it is time for my third #EJAFellowupdate ! These past few weeks with Legal Aid Chicago, I have been tasked with drafting a discovery response for an upcoming case, drafting a complaint in an effort to help a client retain her housing choice voucher, and perhaps the most labor intensive, contacting properties around the Chicago area to help two clients transferring from Project-Based Section 8 Housing pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act find new homes. Each of these projects has not been without their difficulties or pitfalls, but I have learned quite a bit in the process of working on them and it is great knowing that my efforts are going towards the worthy goal of helping our clients retain their housing.

Entry 4:

As we approach the end of the summer and the beginning of the fall, it is time for my final EJA Fellow update! My internship with Legal Aid Chicago's Housing Practice Group ended on Monday, and while I am sad to leave such a great organization I am excited to take what I have learned over this summer and apply it to what lies ahead in my career. Over the course of the summer, I gained invaluable experiences in my work with the Housing Practice Group. The work I conducted gave me an insight into what the day-to-day work of a public interest attorney can entail, and the experience provided by this work will be a great help to me as I prepare to enter the workforce as a full-time attorney. More specifically, my work with the Housing Practice Group taught me quite a bit about eviction proceedings, strategic approaches to litigation relating to potential evictions or housing choice voucher terminations, and public housing programs. While I am uncertain if my next position will be directly tied to housing law, the experience of working in the field of housing law has prepared me to work with issues that involve local common law and statutes along with complex administrative and cooperative federalist structures. Perhaps most valuably, over the summer I had the great pleasure of working with some of the most dedicated and intelligent people that I have ever met. Their example has set a high bar for me, and I hope to bring the same dedication and passion to my future work that these individuals bring daily to their work.

The work EJA Fellows do helps address the access-to-justice gap; 80% of those living in poverty who require civil legal services don't have access to it. Any donations to EJA would be greatly appreciated.