



## Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



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**Law School:** Howard University School of Law

**Organization:** D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center

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### Update 1:

My favorite part about my internship thus far is working with those individuals living in poverty and being able to make a difference in their lives, especially during a public health emergency. Many individuals are so grateful for the work that we do when it comes to eviction defense and housing conditions, and I enjoy being able to play a direct role when it comes to client intake and sitting in on their hearings or mediations. The most recent mediation was impactful because we were able to assist a client who was at risk of losing his home, so I got to see the entire process from the beginning at intake, to preparing files and discovery to send to the attorney, to phone calls about what he wants his agreement to look like, and the mediation where both sides were able to work out an agreement that made both parties happy and allowed the tenant to remain in the home. I also saw what a mediation agreement document looked like and sat with the attorney to see what goes into the writing.

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### Update 2:

My most recent project has been conflicts check, which I learned that there are attorneys in the field whose sole purpose is to conduct conflict checks. The importance of this role and learning how to do this within my organization is the ability to help underrepresented clients gain representation and bring comfort to the client that someone is looking out for their best interests. This also helps us gain the loyalty and trust of our clients who may have not had the best experiences when it comes to their case, such as not being able to trust their landlord or property manager. Lastly, when a conflict of interest does present itself, the client is still able to receive representation from our other community organizations who work within our network and do not have to go without representation during a public health crisis.



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**Update 3:**

Currently, I have been doing client intakes for the Landlord-Tenant Legal Assistance Network which is a central intake line for 6 organizations: Bread for the City, DC Bar Pro Bono Center, AARP, Neighborhood Legal Services Program, Legal Aid Society & Rising for Justice. I have been screening clients with housing condition matters and eviction notices and determining eligibility to place them with a pro bono attorney who can provide further information or representation. I have also done intakes for small landlords, who own less than 4 units, and providing information about the lifting of the moratorium. These matters have been the majority of my workday for the past few days and weeks since the moratorium is lifting.

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**Entry 4:**

During my final weeks working at the D.C. Bar Pro Bono Center, I wrapped up on client matters and finished my writing project on protective order payments and their negative impacts on the indigent tenant, especially during the public health crisis. In this writing assignment, I introduced the order and how it's used in the Landlord and Tenant Branch, where tenants are required to pay a certain amount into the court registry. I expounded on the original purpose of these orders, which was to assure equity between the landlord and tenant and maintain the status quo of the landlord and tenant relationship, pending litigation. Next, I talked about how a protective order is appealable since it has the practical effect of refusing an injunction since the proposed order permanently enjoins a litigant to making payments. Additionally, I wrote about how a protective order is beneficial to a landlord because it ensures rent, but it is a disadvantage to tenants who are unable to pay. Particularly, during a public health emergency, issues arise as it relates to loss of possession of the unit for tenants who are unable to pay because they stayed home, inability to access the judicial system because of the lack of access to Wi-Fi, and the unfair burden it places on tenant's who are unable to defend their fundamental rights.