



Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: Amy Stidham

Law School: University of Pennsylvania

Organization: Philadelphia Legal Assistance

Update 1:

This summer, I am excited to be working at Philadelphia Legal Assistance with funding from Equal Justice America. In my day to day, I will be helping low-income clients file for child custody, child support, protection from abuse orders, or divorce completely free of charge to them. This work is so important to providing independence for victims of domestic abuse. EJA is fundraising to be able to support more fellows in the coming summers so that they can do good work too. Please consider donating if you want to support our work!

Update 2:

This summer, I am excited to be working at Philadelphia Legal Assistance with funding from Equal Justice America. I currently have 10 low-income clients that I am assisting with child custody, child support, and Protection from Abuse orders. My EJA grant isn't just funding me — it is funding these clients' ability to receive legal assistance on issues that are extremely important in their lives. Please consider donating if you want to support our work, our clients, and future EJA fellows! And reach out to me anytime if you want to discuss why access to Family Law services is so important to achieving justice for underserved communities.

Update 3:

As this month's update for my EJA fellowship, I thought I would share a few things I've learned about family law in Pennsylvania through my internship. Did you know that if you share custody of your child with another person, you can't move to another county in the same state without permission from the other party or the court? Did you know that once you file for custody in any state, you must continue to litigate in that state until both parties agree to change jurisdiction, even if you've moved across the country? Did you know that emotional and financial abuse from an intimate partner often do not qualify for Protection from Abuse under Pennsylvania law? Imagine how any of these three situations would go for a victim of domestic abuse. Imagine not having any sort of legal aid to help you navigate that, since over 80% of civil legal needs are not met for the general population.



Update 4:

This summer, I was lucky to have the opportunity to work with Philadelphia Legal Assistance with funding from Equal Justice America. I am currently in the last week of my internship, and I have had the opportunity to draft custody complaints and modifications, work at the family law help desk at Philadelphia Family Court, talk clients through complex family law matters, and file divorces.

In my last week, as I finish up with my clients, I am also working on a writing piece for PLA that will look at how Protection from Abuse orders treat emotional abuse victims in Pennsylvania.

I am grateful for the opportunities I've had this summer, and I encourage you to donate to EJA, if you are able, so that future public interest law students can have the funding to make an impact during their summers as well.