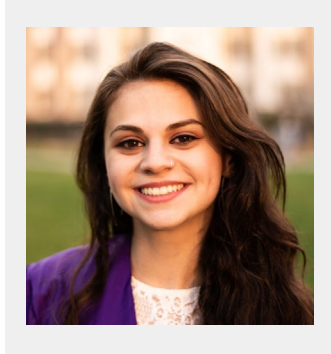




Summer 2021 EJA Fellow:



Name: Melissa Kouri

Law School: University of Richmond

Organization: Blue Ridge Legal Services

Update 1:

I spent the first two weeks of my summer internship position with Blue Ridge Legal Services working on an interesting and complex elder law/plea in bar case. I spent time researching incapacitation law in Virginia and how it might impact our client. Luckily, my work helped my supervising attorneys get closer to finding a resolution.

Update 2:

In the second two weeks of my internship, I moved to contract and arbitration disputes. I spent time assisting a physically disabled client who had found herself stuck with credit loans that she did not intend to authorize. Though I wasn't able to resolve the situation, I did help my supervising attorney get much closer to finding a viable route to cancelling the underlying contract that put our client in such an unfortunate position

Update 3:

I spent most of the third two weeks of the internship working on various VEC claims. This was great exposure for me as I'd never gotten the opportunity to work through employment issues. I hope that my work on these cases was especially helpful given the massive impact that COVID-19 had on unemployment claims and the difficulties many low-income individuals have been facing in the wake of the pandemic.



Entry 4:

I finished off my internship by revisiting some of my old cases and finishing off some smaller projects. Luckily, the elder law/plea in bar case that I undertook at the beginning of the summer was officially settled and resolved. I feel very lucky to have been a part of the effort to get our client a favorable settlement that will hopefully help him to right some of the financial issues he has been facing in the wake of his mother's tragic passing. Besides completing this summer's long project, I also spent a bit more time resolving some simple unemployment claims, and I got the ball rolling on several no-fault divorce cases for my supervising attorneys. While doing so, I got the opportunity to interact with clients via email and phone calls even more so than I did throughout the first part of the summer, which I found particularly beneficial. Over the course of the summer, I was exposed to an incredible variety of civil issues. Blue Ridge Legal Services did a wonderful job of keeping me busy and making sure I learned something new every day. I initially accepted this position because I was excited about the wide variety of topics it would allow me to engage with, and the position did not disappoint. While this great exposure was extremely useful to me personally in terms of helping me picture what I want the rest of my legal career to look like, I am extremely happy to have had the opportunity to assist several clients in the Blue Ridge area with pressing legal issues that they may not have been able to resolve were it not for Blue Ridge Legal Services.