



**Host Site:** West Tennessee Legal Services

**Project:** Civil Legal Help for Families Affected By Opioid Crisis

**Location:** Fellow will be based out of WTLS' main office in Jackson, TN but will work throughout our 17 county service area in partnership with regional drug court(s); Safe Baby Court (targeted community approach for reunifying parents of infants and toddlers involved in child welfare judicial system based in Jackson, Madison County, TN); A Mother's Love (collaborative program supporting pregnant women and new mothers with opioid use disorder); drug and alcohol treatment and mental health centers; and with the community health center with locations in three rural counties in our 17 county service area.

**Description of Fellow Project:**

Fellow will conduct/assist with legal needs assessments for individuals affected by the opioid crisis who contact WTLS for help and/or are referred by collaborative community partners working together to Fellow will then work with WTLS housing, benefits, family law, consumer, and senior citizens law project units to address identified needs. Fellow will provide legal research and draft legal documents. Fellow may assist with trial preparation and attend court with attorney in cases where relatives, often elderly, are caring for and need the protection of legal custody for children whose parent(s) are addicted to opioids. Fellow will also identify individuals who qualify for expungement, or if criminal record is not expungable under TN law, for a court-ordered "Certificate of Employability" (which protects employers from liability for negligent hiring and also provides a judge's official "stamp of approval" that the convicted felon is rehabilitated), and help WTLS' pro bono coordinator by gathering information, needed documentation, and forms for referral to a pro bono attorney to help with expungement/Certificate of Employability. Fellow will additionally provide targeted collaborative community outreach with drug courts; Safe Baby Court; A Mother's Love; drug, alcohol, and mental health treatment programs; and community health center (located in 3 of the 17 counties in WTLS' service area) to provide information for those organizations and people they serve on how civil legal aid helps families affected by the opioid crisis to identify barriers to problems for which there is a legal solution.

