

**Host Site:** Land of Lincoln Legal Aid, Inc.

**Topic of Project:** Domestic Violence

**Location:** Charleston, IL

The project will be in-person as long as public health conditions allow.

**Description of Fellow Project:**

The Fellow will work alongside and under the supervision of our experienced Eastern Regional Offices attorneys and staff to perform outreach, community education and provide legal assistance to a growing population of domestic violence survivors who face isolation and economic instability due to the remoteness of rural Illinois which lacks public transportation, childcare, and sometimes even cellphone service. The greatest number of residents seeking our help from the Charleston office are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. The Fellow will be trained on how to assist and represent these at-risk clients in a holistic way, particularly as our clients often have more than one legal issue at a time.

In addition, the Fellow will work directly with the supervising attorney to secure clients' immediate safety from their abusers, typically by seeking emergency and plenary orders of protection. Once we have secured the immediate physical safety of the client and their family, Land of Lincoln and the fellow will work with the client to identify other legal matters that our organization can assist with to ensure long-term independence from their abuser. The Fellow will administer a civil legal needs assessment to each client and help other attorneys who may file matters on the survivor's behalf—such as a divorce or bankruptcy—or defend in eviction or getting public benefits reinstated. The Fellow will also conduct safety planning and future legal risk management counseling with the client, as well as draft pleadings and letters, obtain evidence, and attend court and negotiations. The student will gain the knowledge and direct hands-on experience of providing holistic civil legal help to individuals in crisis in rural, central Illinois.

**Applicant Qualifications:**

- Access to reliable transportation