

Host Site: Legal Aid of West Virginia, Inc.

Topic of Project: Housing

Location: Beckley, WV & Elkins, WV

This project will be conducted in-person if public health conditions allow.

Description of Fellow Project:

The Legal Help for Renters Fellow at Legal Aid of West Virginia will work closely with experienced LAWV attorneys on two types of work. In counties served by Legal Aid's Beckley and Elkins offices, the Fellows will:

- 1) Provide direct civil legal services focusing on stabilizing clients' housing and economic stability to rural renters facing or at risk of eviction. Fellows will work closely with LAWV staff on eviction prevention work. They will also participate in holistic assessments of client legal needs to determine if legal help on such issues as drivers' license reinstatement, child support, public benefits, a domestic violence protective order, or an expungement would improve the client's long-term prospects for maintaining shelter and stability. In working with LAWV staff attorneys to assist rural renters, Fellows' tasks will include conducting client interviews, doing research, drafting legal memoranda and pleadings, carrying out case discovery and attending administrative proceedings and hearings.
- 2) Assist LAWV staff in targeted outreach and legal education for community partners and the public on legal issues related to the above topics. Fellows will work with their assigned local offices to design and implement a "Rural Renters Outreach Campaign" to increase client awareness of how to take advantage of Emergency Rental Assistance funds available through the West Virginia Housing Development Fund, and of legal help available through LAWV for eligible clients. Fellows will also develop community education materials on eviction prevention and legal interventions which stabilize housing and income.

Applicant Qualifications:

We can provide housing assistance to the students in the form of helping them identify local options and networking within local communities to ascertain what housing opportunities are available.