



Host Site: Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc.

Project: ACEs-Focused Legal Aid

Location: West Memphis, Helena, or Jonesboro

Description of Fellow Project:

Legal Aid has a long-standing medical-legal partnership program focused on improving health and social outcomes for low-income Arkansans and to transform the systems that serve vulnerable populations such as children in poverty. As scientific research reveals that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are a risk factor for many of the most common and serious disease in the United States, Legal Aid turns its focus on families with children experiencing ACEs. Arkansas ranks highest in the nation for the number of children with two or more ACEs, with almost thirty percent of its children believed to have experienced two or more ACEs. This fellow will assist Legal Aid in its early phases of transitioning into an ACEs-focused program.

At least twice a week, the law student will travel to Crittenden, Monroe, Saint Francis, Lee and Phillips county to provide legal information and education to community partners and clients at established outreach locations, as well as to interview potential clients. The remainder of the student's time will be spent assisting in representing rural clients in legal proceedings, in activities such as fact gathering and investigation, legal research and writing, and assisting in courtroom representation. Students who are eligible to practice under the Arkansas Student Practice Rule will be given the opportunity to represent clients in hearings. The student may also develop written educational materials and support the systemic advocacy efforts of Legal Aid's efforts to educate the community about the legal services available to assist families against adverse childhood experiences, and to develop collaborative strategies with other workgroups to address the holistic needs of participants in the project.

