



## **Children's Law Center – Domestic Violence Program Law Student Intern**

The Domestic Violence Program of the Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center represents the best interests of children when one of their parents has filed for a civil protection order in Denver County Court. Denver is the only jurisdiction in Colorado with a designated protection order courtroom, and the Domestic Violence Program is the only one of its kind in the country. Using volunteer attorneys and law students, the DV Program provides a guardian ad litem to every family. These GALs work as a team with a social worker, law student, or volunteer attorney to investigate the family's situation and assesses each parent's ability to protect the children, keep them safe, and provide appropriate parenting. The investigation generally includes interviewing each parent, interviewing the children (if age-appropriate), obtaining criminal histories and reviewing law enforcement records, and at times, speaking to third-parties, such as relatives, teachers, medical and mental health care providers, and human services caseworkers.

GALs are appointed when one party files for a protection order, and are expected to complete an investigation and file a written report with the court on the next court date fourteen days later. These are fast-paced cases. Once the GAL team has completed the investigation, a written report is drafted, following a format provided by the Program. This report is shared with the parties and the court on the day of the hearing. Reports include an analysis of the facts collected and recommendations regarding parenting time under the court's "care and control of children" authority, which last for up to one year.

At the hearing, GALs appear as attorneys for the children's best interests and advocate for care and control orders that meet the needs of the children involved. This may mean mediating a stipulation between the parties, recommending that one parent maintain care and control for a period of time, or participating in an evidentiary hearing on the matter of care and control.

### **Duties:**

- Work closely with the Program Director and Program Manager to provide GAL representation to children in protection order cases in Denver County Court.
- Assist Program Manager in processing new cases.
- Conduct investigations in collaboration with volunteer attorneys, social workers, Program Manager and/or Program Director.
- Attend/appear at court hearings on protection orders.
- Assist in preparation for hearings.
- Conduct legal research on unique issues presented by protection order cases.
- Draft GAL reports.
- Attend community networking meetings.
- Travel to other counties to gather information on the protection order process outside of Denver.
- Follow up with volunteer attorneys to collect case summaries.

Learning Objectives:

- Become familiar with protection order process and GAL role.
- Develop investigative skills.
- Engage in best interests of children analysis.
- Gain insight into domestic violence dynamics and impact on children.
- Become familiar with nonprofit program operations.
- Network with representatives of community programs and attorneys in local firms.
- Interact with judicial officers and other court personnel.

Qualifications:

- Knowledge of DV and interest in learning more.
- Interest in investigative work.
- Basic knowledge of either protection orders and/or criminal justice system.
- Excellent legal writing, interpersonal and oral communication skills.
- Willingness to take initiative and respond to changing needs to program on short notice.

General inquiries and applications can be directed to:

Summer Legal Internship Program – DV Program  
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