

TO:

Dan Ruben

Executive Director

Equal Justice America

The volume and variety of legal experience I gained during my internship for the Homeless Advocacy Project this Summer was incredible. The Homeless Advocacy Project is a pro bono legal services organization that primarily focuses on defending tenants in unlawful detainer proceedings in San Francisco. Although it is an individual project of the Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco, the HAP office is at a different location and HAP attorneys exclusively litigate cases which are not handled by the JDC or any other organization. Client intake at the HAP office takes place weekly and HAP attorneys are enthusiastic about effectively representing as many clients as possible, so the HAP attorneys- of which there are six (three who primarily litigate and three who are in managerial/supervisory roles) - are under an extraordinary amount of pressure. Because of the small size of the legal team relative to the volume of clients, summer interns are utilized as much as possible. This summer, there were three interns total and each of us was assigned to one of the three litigators.

After two to three days of training which covered major aspects of San Francisco unlawful detainer actions and tenant advocacy, we were immediately given high stakes tasks under the supervision and guidance of our supervising attorneys. When I walked in on my first day of actual work, I was asked to take a client's declaration. She was being evicted due to nonpayment of rent. She could not pay rent for the past three to four months because she was having life-threatening medical issues during this time and had to pay medical bills. A couple days later, the landlord agreed to let her stay in her home. The experience of taking my first declaration was intense because I recognized the sensitivity of the situation, and after learning that she was allowed to stay in her home, the knowledge that I was playing an important and positive role in possibly the most traumatic event in someone's life gave me a sense of value that I had never felt before in my life. These alternating senses of pressure and accomplishment were a constant presence during my internship, because interns were used to do any work that the

attorneys needed help with, since they are all handling a high volume of cases with dozens of simultaneous critical issues at any given time.

During my two months at HAP, I drafted two motions for summary judgment, three reasonable accommodation requests, interviewed clients for interrogatory responses, drafted form and special interrogatories, took declarations, drafted motions in limine to exclude evidence, wrote legal briefs to submit with the court, and so much more. Every day, my supervising attorney taught me something new, gave me an opportunity to apply my new knowledge to a case, and gave me feedback on my work. Since interns conduct intake, many times we got to see unlawful detainer cases develop from the very beginning until settlement or dismissal. Because of this, I felt very passionate for HAP clients and my emotion would push me to work harder and focus more than I ever thought was possible. Watching the positive effect that HAP attorneys were having in people's lives, and being able to visibly help the attorneys in their advocacy, has been the most professionally and emotionally stimulating experience of my life.

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Expected to graduate in 2018