

October 5th, 2023
Dan Ruben
Executive Director, Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 201
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA, 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to express my gratitude for the award provided by Equal Justice America for the Summer 2023 term. The financial support of Equal Justice America enabled me to be able to work for Equip For Equality, a special education nonprofit and the protection and advocacy disability organization in Illinois. Without the support of Equal Justice America, my experience at Equip For Equality would not have been possible and I am extremely grateful for the opportunities I was afforded and the chance to learn from attorneys at Equip For Equality.

At Equip For Equality this past summer I was able to grow my understanding of special education law and learn foundational skills in legal advocacy. As an intern in the Special Education Clinic I had the chance to take the lead on lots of client work. I learned to conduct effective intake calls with potential clients. Furthermore, I learned the importance of case assessment meetings to determine the pertinent legal questions and to assess what legal advice, representation, or referrals our organization could make. Additionally, I was learned critical legal research methods and skills by utilizing various online legal databases and synthesizing information from reports, caselaw, and agency guidelines. The attorneys at Equip For Equality trained me in how to produce an effective record review. By learning how to comb through records for critical information to create a timeline and case history, I was able to assist in my attorneys' cases by identifying the key documents that were critical for the case at hand. Furthermore, I learned effective timekeeping strategies through efficient and thorough recording of hours worked.

Beyond the specific hard skills of legal advocacy that my summer at Equip For Equality taught me, I also gained soft skills in communication, client response, and collaboration. Working with my supervising attorney afforded me the chance to work as part of a cohesive team that necessitated effective communication and shared responsibility. My supervising attorney also taught me critical skills in client communication including the importance of expressing empathy in intake calls and taking the time to support and listen to our client's needs and requests. Furthermore, I had to work collaboratively with other interns at Equip For Equality and hold each other accountable to shared deadlines and research meetings. These skills made me a more effective and clear communicator.

The opportunities that I received at Equip For Equality this summer were expansive and impressive. Through my internship I was able to attend several IEP meetings and witness how attorneys argued for and against the specific needs of our clients. Furthermore, I was able to

attend meeting with pro bono attorneys and see how the corporate / non-profit partnership operates in education law cases. I was able to attend symposiums and talks about special education law and engage with my fellow interns and supervising attorneys about new practices in the field. Additionally, I was able to attend a juvenile detention center to meet with our clients in person, and through that experience recognized my passion for working with incarcerated youth and in fighting for their right to an appropriate education.

The support, guidance, and gift of Equal Justice America made my incredible experience at Equip For Equality a reality. I am grateful to the donors to Equal Justice America for funding law student interested in public interest law, so that we are able to fight for those individuals most underserved and underrepresented. I am grateful to Equal Justice America for creating the framework for this work to occur.

Kind regards,

Nathaniel Weaver
Legal Intern
Equip For Equality