

Dear Dan Ruben,

This summer I was a member of the criminal records team at Cabrini Green Legal Aid (CGLA). I participated in all the various work that the team is responsible for. I drafted a petition for executive clemency, applications for a health care worker waiver, and assisted clients with sealing and expunging their criminal record. I had a weekly shift at the CGLA Expungement Help Desk at the Daley Center in downtown Chicago. At the help desk I would assist individuals by drafting a petition to seal/expunge their criminal record, which they would then file pro se. CGLA also has partnerships with various organizations around the city. I was able to attend two workforce development agencies, The CARA Program and Growing Home, to research their clients' criminal record.

I truly valued the experiences that I had while interning this summer. I had challenging as well as rewarding clients and I think that speaks to the reality of life as an attorney. I think the challenging piece for me was working with a client that was not always easy to deal with. I was able to maintain a professional demeanor which I think is particularly important in those situations. On the other side of things I had one client that I worked very closely with on a petition for executive clemency. I got to know his personal story very well and we developed a rapport that I am proud of. I hope to be able to represent him in an administrative hearing once I am able to get my 7-11 license and practice under a supervising attorney.

Helping individuals draft their petitions for sealing and expungement was such a great experience. So many people were grateful for the time and respect that we paid them at the help desk. Individuals would come in for assistance mostly because they were out of work due to their criminal record. They relied on us to help them get on the path towards achieving gainful employment. It wasn't always such good news for people. I had one pro se litigant that was

unable to seal his record due to the type of offenses that were on his record. He was unhappy but he was still thankful for the information that we were able to offer him. Even though he wasn't able to seal his record he was able to receive another form of relief through a healthcare worker waiver as he wanted to be a janitor in a hospital.

As a 1L I was surprised at the level of work that I was able to participate in. I started the internship knowing that other interns had their 7-11 license and would be able to go into court so I might not be getting as much work as they did. But I was wrong. Although I was not able to represent clients, I was able to assist so many people. CGLA also prioritized my learning experience and took me to court even though I was not able to assist them. I am grateful for the experience I had interning this summer. I would definitely recommend interning with CGLA to other students and I intend to continue volunteering when I can.

The funding for this internship was invaluable. It allowed me to commit to my internship by being fully present every day without the worry of finances. In my opinion, funding for public interest internships allows for students to produce quality work. This benefits both the students and the organization they work for. Being able to see the impact that public interest law has is extremely rewarding and it would not be possible for so many without the funding. I think one of the lasting memories from this summer is the great people that I was able to work with. It is amazing to see how passionate the people in the public interest are.

Thank you,

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