

August 31, 2016

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Summer 2016 Fellowship Reflection. Wineland, Madeleine

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben:

My second summer with LAF has been delightful and I feel as though I have grown so much with my team!

This summer I worked as an AmeriCorps J.D. Intern in the Public Benefits practice group. My projects included intake from our veteran's project hotline, making call-backs and opening up Legal Server Profiles for each client, and presenting potential clients to my supervisor and to our group at our weekly case acceptance meetings. Additionally, I drafted legal memoranda and researched legal questions involving veterans' health care, food stamps, disability compensation, and Medicaid issues. I also did more work this summer with cases involving clients and their SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. I put together several charts and graphs highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of requesting medical records under FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and the Privacy Act, to help guide clients and other LAF staff in the future. Further, I compiled check-lists and various Pro Se packets to help provide a step-by-step guide for clients to file PTSD and service-connected disability compensation claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

What I found most challenging was putting together these graphs and charts with a list of advantages and disadvantages of each legal avenue a client (and our attorneys on behalf of a client) can take. Since these charts were meant to help guide others in the future, I felt a lot of pressure to make sure my listed advantages and disadvantages were correct and well-researched. That being said, the research I conducted to complete these projects took up much of my time, and I quickly found there was no easy way to do it in just one or several weeks. There were also many questions I had to answer thoroughly, to help eliminate confusion. I sometimes had to stay afterhours and start at the first page of a 100-page manual and read it all the way through in order to gain a full and clear understanding of the content.

Surprisingly, many of these manuals, pamphlets, and statutes were incredibly ambiguous, even after I read them fully, carefully, and repeatedly over the course of several days. This process reiterated to me, as it has been since the beginning of law school, that the legal world is not clear, which is why there are so many disputes over the meaning of specific statutory language. I experienced this up-close in my day-to-day projects. Similarly, what I found frustrating and surprising at the same time was understanding how routes of recourse for the impoverished were so unclear, even to me, a literate and experienced lawyer-in-training. In other words, it was difficult for me to navigate certain government websites and understand federal statutes, which allowed me to see how difficult this can be for clients themselves to navigate in order to apply for welfare programs for which they are in dire need.

The feedback I received from the clients I worked one-on-one with is what most inspired me. I often heard many of them say that my patient demeanor and kindness was the best part of their navigating

through the legal process, and that most of the time they do not work with people with this kind of temperament. Additionally this summer, my team had another intern from Loyola work with us. So, I had a lot of fun training this intern and others for the following school year.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to receive funding from EJA for my fellowship this past summer and I hope to continue working with LAF this coming fall.

Sincerely,

Maddy Wineland

Madeleine Wineland
DePaul University College of Law
J.D. Candidate '17



Equal justice starts here.

August 29, 2016

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Madeleine Wineland – Summer 2016 Fellowship Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben:

We are writing to provide our evaluation of Madeleine Wineland's Legal Services Fellowship this past summer.

Thanks to support from the Equal Justice America fellowship, Madeleine has interned in our Veterans' Rights Project at LAF (f/k/a Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago) since the summer of 2015.

Madeleine's work has been consistently excellent. In her first year with the Veterans' Rights Project, we had lost a significant portion of the project's staff. Madeleine stepped up and helped keep the project going. She handled the project's hotline, coordinated multiple veteran services clinics, interviewed clients, and researched legal issues affecting the veteran population. She answered questions about availability of various forms of relief, as well as more common issues concerning veteran benefit claims, food stamps, Medicaid and Social Security disability compensation. She has an excellent rapport with clients that enables her to obtain the important facts to help tailor the legal advice they need.

In the past year, three new fellowship attorneys started with the Veterans' Rights Project. Madeleine was instrumental in getting this new staff up to speed on the project's hotline and clinic. Additionally, she was very involved in revamping the intake process and screening guides needed to address the project's expanded capacity.

With the addition of the new staff members, Madeleine has been able to do more extended work on the project's cases. Her legal research has been crucial to the success of a number of VA benefits, family law, and housing cases. Her work will have a lasting on the project. Her research into the Privacy Act and Freedom of

Information Act requests for military and VA files is now part of the training that is featured on the project's website.

Going beyond traditional law student expectations, Madeleine has consistently gone beyond basic work expectations as a law student. She has been a great asset to our organization, and I evaluate her fellowship as excellent.

Thank you for your consideration of this information.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ellen G. Rheume

Ellen G. Rheume
Equal Justice Works-AmeriCorps Veterans Legal Corps Fellow/Attorney
Public Benefits Practice Group

Phone: 312.229.6337 | Fax: 312.612.1537

120 South LaSalle Street, Ste. 900 | Chicago, IL 60603

www.lafchicago.org

/s/ Catherine Schur

Catherine Schur
AmeriCorps VISTA Attorney
Public Benefits Practice Group

Phone: 312.229.6391 | Fax: 312.612.1591

120 South LaSalle Street, Ste. 900 | Chicago, IL 60603

www.lafchicago.org