

August 26, 2012

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Building II, Suite 204  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I recently completed a summer internship at the housing unit of the East Bay Community Law Center in Berkeley, CA. My internship was incredibly rewarding and reinforced my commitment to public interest law and I write to thank you and Equal Justice America for providing me with the funding to work for such a fantastic organization.

At the East Bay Community Law Center, I primarily worked on providing unlawful detainer defense to indigent tenants. Unlawful detainer defense for indigents is a top priority for two reasons. First, unlawful detainer is a summary proceeding in California, giving tenants very little time to find adequate legal assistance in order to defend themselves in court. Additionally, many of our clients are section 8 voucher recipients who would also lose their vouchers if they are evicted. Because section 8 vouchers are often the only thing preventing our clients from becoming homeless, it is critical that they receive adequate legal representation.

In addition to unlawful detainer defense, I also worked on general tenant's rights issues. At weekly Tenant's Right Clinics, we provided brief legal services to indigent tenants and educated the community of their rights as tenants. Additionally, we also took on several affirmative cases against slumlords and banks.

This is particularly important work as the foreclosure crisis has greatly increased the number of unlawful detainers against lawful tenants. In Oakland and Berkeley, foreclosure is not a legally valid reason to pursue an unlawful detainer against a lawful tenant. However, many banks pursue unlawful detainers regardless of the law as they know that they can flip the properties for 20-30% more without a tenant. The banks and their agents often refuse to perform their lawful obligations as landlords, refusing to make necessary repairs or even pay the utilities. In some cases, the banks even performed illegal lockouts and disposed of the tenant's properties

within the premises. In order to deter this behavior, we represent tenants in suing the worst offenders.

All in all, the work I did at the East Bay Community Law Center was both rewarding and educational. I came to the East Bay Community Law Center looking for an intense direct legal service experience and that was exactly what I received. I wanted to thank you and Equal Justice America for your support.

Sincerely,

Daniel Yu  
New York University Law School