

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am grateful that Equal Justice America made possible what I view as the opportunity of a lifetime. The EJA Fellowship allowed me to work with LAF (formerly the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago) in their Housing Practice Group. I do not think that a more committed or talented group of attorneys, doing more important work can be found anywhere.

The majority of our clients are public housing residents or Housing Choice Voucher recipients facing the loss of their benefits. This was my first opportunity to do substantive legal work and I learned more in ten weeks than I ever thought possible. More importantly, the experience has strengthened my resolve to be a poverty lawyer upon graduation, and deepened my interest in housing as an area of practice. The work was difficult and at times frustrating, but at the end of the day I left work looking forward to what I had to do the following day. At the beginning of this semester, when I spoke with some of my classmates regarding what we had done over the summer, they said that they had combed through documents or sat at their desks doing research. I did a great deal of that, too. However, my response was, "I helped to keep poor people in their homes," and I am very proud of that fact. Unlike most of my classmates, I also the opportunity to make several court appearances on behalf of our clients, was able to represent clients in administrative hearings, and learned a great deal about how to effectively interview and interact with our clients.

I'd like to discuss two clients whom I was able to help. One, a mother of three, faced loss of her voucher benefits because the housing authority decided she had violated the program's family obligations by committing the serious lease violation of failure to pay her rent contribution, for which the housing authority also claimed she had been evicted. However, the evidence showed that our client was on a month-to-month lease, the landlord had terminated the lease because he had planned to remodel the building, and wanted all tenants out of it. Although our client had attempted to pay her rent, the landlord had refused to accept it. Essentially, our client had done nothing wrong, yet faced the prospect of losing her only means of paying for housing. I am proud to say that the housing authority agreed to reinstate our client to the program after they read a brief I wrote in support of our petition for certiorari.

I represented another client in her voucher termination hearing. This client faced termination because of false allegations made by her landlord, with whom our client had a contentious relationship. By combing through voluminous documentary evidence, I was able to find evidence which strongly refuted the landlord's allegations, and the hearing officer found in our client's favor.

In both cases, in addition to the great satisfaction that I received from helping our clients, who faced the very real prospect of homelessness, I also was able to see first-hand and in a real-world setting the power of a strong argument, and the benefits of careful preparation. This is not something one can get in a law school classroom.

So, again thank you for making possible this incredible opportunity. LAF has asked me back for the fall semester, and I look forward to the work ahead.

Sincerely,

David R. Landau
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2014
The John Marshall Law School



Equal justice starts here.
August 27, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to thank you for sponsoring David Landau as a senior law intern at LAF (Legal Assistance Foundation) this past summer. I received an Equal Justice America grant to work at Greater Boston Legal Services in 2000, and have pursued a career in public interest work because of that experience. I personally appreciate that your agency continues to foster dedication to public interest careers.

David was an invaluable asset to us this summer. In addition to research, client interviewing, and legal writing, David was also able to represent two Section 8 voucher holders in voucher termination hearings with the Chicago Housing Authority. He attended court a number of times on behalf of clients, and argued and won a motion for a temporary restraining order. The judge who granted the temporary restraining order advised the parties that he never granted a TRO in the context in which we were seeking it, but that David had convinced him and this was the first time. This helped continue Section 8 voucher assistance pending a court's review of the Chicago Housing Authority's termination of the voucher.

Having David working with the Housing Practice Group at LAF this summer allowed our staff attorneys to accept more cases and get more work done for our clients than if we did not have him. He made our jobs easier and he made our clients' lives better. Thank you for giving him this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie M. Harcum", written in a cursive style.

Julie M. Harcum
Senior Attorney
(312) 347-8383 T
(312) 612-1483 F
jharcum@lafchicago.org