

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

Re: Letter about my fellowship experience.

Dear Mr. Ruben,

First of all, thank you for an amazing fellowship experience. I was interning at Legal Aid Society of D.C. family law unit. I am from Ethiopia and I want to pursue my career in public litigation when I return back to my country. Public interest law is my passion and I want to contribute my part in advancing free legal aid for women in Ethiopia. When I decided to intern at Legal Aid Society of D.C., I was hoping to learn how the service is provided effective and efficiently. I also wanted to learn how to handle clients that come from different backgrounds. My internship at legal aid society was fulfilling when it comes to achieving my goals.

During my internship at legal aid society I was able to serve so many clients from different background. Most of the clients were women who are victims of domestic violence. My main responsibilities as an intern were Assist Legal Aid attorneys at the family law unit in representing clients in proceedings in D.C. Superior Court and various public agencies. Interact with clients and attend client meetings, hearings, trials, and administrative proceedings. Conducted legal research, drafted legal documents and memoranda, and contributed in factual investigation processes. I also participated in internal staff meetings and undertook some administrative tasks. In addition, I was doing translation work for Amharic and Tigrigna speakers.

One of the clients I served was an Ethiopian mother who was fighting for custody of her child against her ex-husband who was never involved in raising the child. When this client first contacted legal aid, the D.C. Superior court had already issued a default on her. So, my

supervisor and I were able to help her file a motion to vacate the default. During this process, I went to the court with her and helped her file her motion. Through this process in addition to my main responsibilities I also was working as an interpreter. The case was still pending when I finished my internship.

When this client came to our office, she was confused about the whole legal process. She was also scared by the fact that her broken English and not knowing what to do in the court would cost her losing her child to her estranged husband. I saw her hope of keeping her child build up when she got our service. Especially, when she saw how passionate we are of helping her, the confusion and panic was no longer there. Even if the case was still pending when I left Legal Aid Society, working with this client was two birds in one stone for me. First of all, as a human rights lawyer, I was able to protect not only our client's right as a mother but also the child's right to live in a stable and peaceful environment with a parent who was present in her life the whole time. The other thing was, for the first time in my career, I was able to provide an actual legal aid service to a client.

Serving not only the client mentioned above but all my other twelve (12) clients, made me feel for the first time in my life as a lawyer who is making a difference. Not only that, every time I heard "thank you" from my clients, I became more convinced that public interest law is my true passion and purpose in life. In addition, this experience made me to aspire to go back to my country and serve the poor women who are crying for justice. I also want to take my experience from my internship and provide the same high quality legal aid service for poor Ethiopian women.

Maereg Alemayheu
Georgetown University

August 31, 2016

Katie Toman
Office Manager
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Recommendation Letter for Maereg Alemayehu

Dear Ms. Toman,

My name is Wemi Peters and I am a Staff Attorney in the Family Law/Domestic Violence Unit at the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. I supervised Maereg Alemayehu during her summer 2016 internship at the Legal Aid Society.

Maereg was assigned to the Family Law/Domestic Violence Unit and was always eager to learn more about our work and help in any way that she could. She drafted direct examinations for domestic violence trials, was extremely helpful translating and explaining the legal process to an Amharic client in a custody matter and conducted a 50 state survey on an emerging area of law that affects our client population. Her background in the legal profession in Ethiopia was particularly useful in a case involving an Ethiopian client and with Maereg's help, I was able to understand and address some of my client's concerns about the U.S. legal system.

In addition to her assigned unit, Maereg also worked with attorneys from the Housing Unit and Public Benefits Unit where she translated for Amharic and Tigrigna speaking clients.

Maereg was a hard worker who was not only passionate about the clients that she helped but also very interested in best practices within nonprofit legal services organizations. She spoke about adopting some of those practices in the developing legal services organizations in Ethiopia. It was a pleasure to work with her during her time here and I have no doubt that she will have a successful career.

Sincerely,
Wemi Peters

Wemi Peters | Staff Attorney | **Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia**