

October 21, 2015

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you for granting me a Fellowship that gave me the opportunity to intern at both Bread for the City (“Bread”) and The Legal Aid Society D.C. (“Legal Aid”). A tremendous difficulty that students interested in the public interest sector face, particularly in the summer, is the ability to financially support themselves. Thankfully, the EJA fellowship eased that difficulty, and I committed 14 weeks of my summer to two organizations that provide direct legal services for persons living in poverty in Washington, D.C.

Bread’s mantra is “helping people” and Legal Aid’s mantra is “making justice real.” These two statements collectively and accurately describe exactly what my summer work consisted of.

As an intern at Bread, I acquired a diverse array of legal experience especially because I worked in different practice areas. I assisted attorneys in the Public Benefits, Landlord Tenant, and Family and Domestic Relations areas. My workload consisted of drafting research memoranda and client letters related to child custody cases, child support, repairs of housing code violations, and social security benefits. Additionally, I wrote pleadings and motion papers and reviewed court files in D.C. Superior Court. One of the most rewarding aspects of my time spent at Bread was the ability to work so closely with clients. Bread had an “all hands on deck” type of working environment, and the interns were truly valued. Each week I was responsible for a facilitating at least two on-call/walk-in shifts. On these days, I answered phone calls, and also met with clients to either address their legal questions, conduct an intake, or refer their issue to another organization that might be able to better assist them. Essentially, each day I spent at Bread, I had *at least* one interaction with a client.

As an intern at Legal Aid, I was able to work in the Consumer Protection practice area. The exciting aspect of working in the Consumer Protection practice area was that I was able to weekly assist attorneys with providing same-day legal advice to clients in both D.C. Small Claims Court and D.C. Superior Court. Legal Aid is one of the few organizations that conducts a court-based initiative in providing clients with same-day legal advice. On one particular instance, a client informed the attorney and me that she was so appreciative of our help, and that because of the legal advice, she felt as if she had someone who was on her side and had her best interest in mind. Particularly for our population of clients living in poverty, assisting with debt collection and foreclosure prevention cases was overwhelmingly rewarding because our work made a difference in determining whether an individual could keep a roof over their head or hold on to their paycheck to support their family.

This summer was truly such a defining moment in my legal education, and I valued each opportunity and its impact on my future legal career. These two summer internships allowed me to gain exposure to diverse areas of law and I am appreciative of the opportunity that EJA gave me.

Sincerely,

Jummy Obayanju
The George Washington University Law School

J.D. Candidate, May 2016