

8/31/13

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This past summer I was a legal intern at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAF). I worked in LAF's Housing Practice Group. Some of the duties I had included interviewing clients, presenting clients' cases at case acceptance meetings (CAMs), researching matters of law and writing memos, and drafting court documents such as discovery requests and answers, jury demands, motions for summary judgment, and petitions for cert (petitions for a trial court to review a final administrative decision). Also, as a rising 3L I obtained my 711 license and appeared in court on behalf of clients.

Most clients in the Housing Practice Group lived in subsidized housing and were facing either eviction or a loss of subsidy. One such client, who I am going to call John, came into LAF during my second week working there. My immediate supervisor, Michele, interviewed him. I was sitting in on the interview, observing so that I could do them myself later in the summer. John lived in supportive housing. He was in supportive housing because he had previously been chronically homeless, which is what supportive housing is meant to remedy.

John had fallen behind in rent by one month because he was trying to pay off the parking tickets that had accumulated on his truck. He believed the eviction was in response to him having the truck, which his property manager was not happy about. He needed the truck to get around because he had a heart condition that made it hard to walk for an extended period of time, making public transportation difficult to utilize. This is not the first time she tried to evict him. He had previously received a 5-day notice for a rent balance of less than a dollar.

John had a court appearance the next day and Michele wanted to argue that missing one month's rent was not a "severe case," which is the statutory standard for evicting from supportive housing. So instead of waiting a week until the next CAM to present the case, Michele brought me to another lawyer's office for an emergency CAM so that he would not have to go down to the courthouse to ask for a continuance. The other lawyer agreed it was a good case and it was accepted.

From that point on Michele had me draft most of the court documents for John's case. After the intake interview I drafted the appearance and jury demand, which was filed later that day. I then shadowed another of LAF's lawyers the next day as she submitted the jury demand to the judge (I could not do this yet because my 711 had not yet arrived). I then went with Michele to court to set the discovery schedule, prepared our responses to the plaintiff's discovery

requests, and drafted our own discovery requests. I also sat in on the meeting Michele had with John to go over the plaintiff's interrogatories to help him answer them. Michele also had me draft a Freedom of Information request from the Department of Family and Supportive Services for the contract information between the city and the housing development so that I could look for funding streams and contractual language that mirrored the regulatory language about only terminating assistance in severe cases. I would have drafted a motion for summary judgment as well but eventually John came to an agreement with his property manager that would allow him to move out without it being an eviction so the case was dropped.

Like many of the assignments I had over the summer, it felt good to help someone in need. John's case stood out because I had met him and also helped out with a significant portion of the case. With most other clients it was either one or the other, so this was nice because it was both. Overall I had a very good experience at LAF and felt it was time very well spent.

Sincerely,

Hal Dworkin
University of Illinois College of Law
J.D. Candidate – Spring 2014