

Dan Ruben, Founder/Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
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Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Essex Newark Legal Services Summer Internship

My internship this summer at Essex Newark Legal Services (ENLS) provided me with more than I expected. After the first few days of getting the required training on their system and how to do intake (interview clients), I was trust into work that was rewarding. I worked in the commercial law unit of ENLS and with prominent lawyer Luisa Fuentes.

One of the first client cases I worked on dealt with a single mom who was sued by her former landlord for early termination of hear lease. The single mother moved out of the apartment because it was infested with mice and other vermin, which made it deplorable and unhealthy for her and her small child to live in. During the course of her tenancy, the single mother, on a number of occasions, made it known to the landlord that repairs were needed. When the repairs were not done, she notified the landlord that she intended to move. She additionally received approval from his property manager. After moving out, the landlord filed a complaint stating that he did not receive proper notification that the tenant intended to move out.

The single mother came to ENLS after she received notice that her bank account was frozen due to the levy the landlord placed on her account after gaining a default judgment against our client. During the course of our representation with the help of my supervising attorney, I filed a motion to vacate default judgment because our client never received notice of a hearing or that there was a default

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judgment against her. During the course of filing the motion, we were in contact with the Plaintiff landlord and requested that he lift the levy on our client's account pursuant to New Jersey State and Federal law, state and federal money are exempt from debt collection and the levy would have to be lifted to give our client access to her government funds. Notifying the plaintiff of this set in motion a number of correspondence arranging for negotiations and settlement as our motion was granted and it was clear that our case would now go to trial. In the conclusion of this case, we were able to avoid trial and make a successful settlement for our client.

At the end of the case, our client was extremely thankful to ENLS for our help in getting her money back and letting the plaintiff know that she would be able to find proper representation through the help of ENLS and Equal Justice America. Working with ENLS this summer was rewarding because I was able to use my legal training to help others. Working with ENLS allowed me to work outside of the classroom and work with real people who are in need of desperate help. The clients I worked with this past summer were so thankful for our help and expressed that they knew they would lose their case or would not be able to make a successful settlement deal. Working with ENLS this summer showed me how much help is needed for those who are disadvantage and who often to go to court without legal representation and because they don't know the law or know what is required of them, end up losing their case. I was so honored to be a part of the ENLS and so grateful to Equal Justice America for giving me the opportunity to make positive changes in the lives of others. I look forward to a career in public interest law.