

August 28, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Rubin:

I am writing to summarize my rewarding experience with the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau this summer. I worked in the Housing Division of this organization, and I was responsible for managing ten active eviction cases litigated in the Boston Housing Court. My responsibilities included counseling my clients about their rights under Massachusetts landlord-tenant law, representing my clients at hearings held at the Boston Housing Court, drafting and responding to discovery requests, and negotiating settlements on behalf of my clients. In addition, I participated in the Attorney for a Day program at the Boston Housing Court. Every other week throughout the summer, I provided free legal advice and limited assistance to pro se tenants with cases scheduled for that same day.

My experience at the Bureau was rewarding because of the opportunity for independent decision-making, combined with supportive and engaging supervision from Harvard clinical instructors. The program is designed so that law students have the opportunity to become the lead attorney on their own cases. Therefore, students can build trusting relationships with clients and ensure that they are carrying out each client's objectives to the fullest extent possible.

One particular highlight of the summer was drafting and submitting a reasonable accommodation request to a public housing authority on behalf of one of my clients. My client was being evicted by the post-foreclosure owner of a house in which she had been a tenant since 1989. Through our representation, we learned that she had a Section 8 mobile voucher at one time, which meant that she was able to move into any apartment and pay only a subsidized portion of the rent. The public housing authority that administered her voucher terminated my client from the program because the previous owner of the house did not keep the property in good condition, and my client did not take the necessary steps to relocate with her voucher. In my request to the public housing authority, I emphasized that my client's disability had made it difficult for her to understand the fact that her voucher was being terminated and that she needed to find a new apartment in order to preserve it. In July, I received notice that the public housing authority granted my reasonable accommodation request, thereby reinstating my client's participation in the Section 8 program. My client now has the opportunity to find alternative housing with her

voucher and will not become homeless as a result of the pending eviction proceedings against her.

This opportunity has meant a great deal to me because I was able to take ownership over my cases and help each individual client toward the goal of stabilizing their housing. It also gave me insight into the rewards and challenges of pursuing a career in poverty law. After this experience, I will likely be seeking a career in public interest law or a position in the private sector that lends itself to numerous opportunities for pro bono work.

Thank you again for making it possible for me to work for the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. I could not have wished for a more rewarding summer.

Sincerely,

Kristen Wekony
Boston University School of Law
J.D. Candidate 2013