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

## Dear Mr. Ruben:

My internship during the summer of 2013 at Greater Boston Legal Services' Housing Division has been an invaluable experience in my personal and professional development. The opportunity to directly assist clients in often severe situations was very rewarding, and served to reaffirm my commitment to use the law as a vehicle for justice throughout my career.

I began helping clients almost immediately upon arrival at GBLS. On my first day, I began researching housing eligibility requirements for a hearing pending in two days. I was thrust into action further when a client contacted the clinic for assistance with what would become one of the cases I would work on extensively throughout the summer.

Facing eviction for non-payment of rent, our client presented numerous counter-claims in her Answer, which I had the responsibility of helping to develop the legal arguments for. I researched and substantially contributed to three motions on the client's behalf, but one in particular had a substantial effect on the case. The motion argued that the client's landlord may potentially be liable to return her security deposit following that landlord's purchasing the property at foreclosure, regardless of whether the landlord received the deposit from the foreclosed-upon prior owner. Facing this potential liability, the landlord agreed to drop his claims regarding the back rent in exchange for our client dropping her claim for the security deposit. Although we did not argue the motion before the court, it essentially resulted in the resolution of the case in a way I consider pretty beneficial to our client, who was able to retain her house and avoid being forced to pay arrears.

For another client, I was fortunate to have even more personal interaction, when I helped research for her case where she was trying to retain a section 8 voucher. After an initial document review, I attended an informal hearing with my supervisor and the BHA. At the hearing, we tried to demonstrate that the client's mental health issues prevented her from taking appropriate steps to follow up with BHA to renew her subsidy. We essentially sought to prove that our client's failure to communicate with the BHA when her symptoms were most prevalent was due to those symptoms, and argued for leniency in the form of a reasonable accommodation to allow her to file late and retain her subsidy. Throughout this process I routinely spoke with the client by phone as we compiled records from her personal materials and other agencies to show the effect of her symptoms on her functioning. I learned about her family; her mother who stood by her side and helped in any way she could, and her children, for whom our client desperately wanted to provide stable housing as a foundation for success in school and life. It was impossible to remain emotionally detached from our client, and as I learned about her years of struggles, as the victim of abuse and then subsequently with mental health issues, the more I learned the more I wanted to help.

But just to tell the stories of these two clients fails to do justice to my experience at GBLS. In the course of my internship, I did no less than: conduct factual, legal, and policy research; write motions and internal memoranda; attend numerous court hearings, mediations, and administrative proceedings; help public housing tenants challenge the sentence of a housing authority director who stole half a million dollars; work on behalf of at least 17 different people directly; and interact daily with a group of extremely dedicated, experienced, and respected attorneys. In short, this was a tremendously valuable experience.

Thank you very much for helping to make this incredible experience even better! The funding I received from EJA was vital in allowing me to devote myself full-time at GBLS, and I honestly feel I contributed something valuable to the organization, and, more importantly, its clients.

Sincerely,

Mike Tartaglia

Boston University School of Law, Class of 2015



August 28, 2013

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

> Re: Michael Tartaglia, EJA fellowship participant at Greater Boston Legal Services For Summer 2013

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I was very pleased to be the supervisor of Michael Tartaglia from May, 2013 to August, 2013 in his legal internship with the Housing Unit of Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), and greatly appreciated the variety of work that Mr. Tartaglia did during his summer here.

Responsibilities included client interviewing and follow-up, factual investigation (particularly checking agency and court records), and legal research and writing (including assistance with legal memoranda filed with court and at administrative agencies, drafting of motions to dismiss and related to discovery, and correspondence both to other counsel and to clients). He took on a number of challenging matters, including the application of the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA), Massachusetts security deposit obligations for successors in interest, whether duties to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities continue after termination of assistance, and the circumstances in which a Section 8 participant could be terminated for off-premises criminal conduct of a household member. Mr. Tartaglia also participated in a number of in-court and out-of-court mediations, as well as in assisting with Attorney of the Day responsibilities at the Boston Housing Court. He also undertook a piece of research which I'm hoping will be a springboard for future Access to Justice efforts on best practices for administrative advocacy—i.e., how better to ensure that Section 8 applicants and participants facing denial and termination of assistance can get effective assistance in administrative hearings. Mr. Tartaglia also did some unique work with Managing Attorney Jay Rose in our office where a former housing authority director was being sentenced for financial fraud and we were presenting information about how residents were adversely impacted by the director's action; on short notice he helped interview the tenants and prepare their statements for consideration at sentencing in the Federal District Court.

I was extremely pleased with Mr. Tartaglia's performance. He was very mature and professional in his approach, and obviously had a wealth of prior experience which was invaluable. He was a very quick study and I had confidence in giving him extremely challenging work, knowing that he could rise to the challenge. He sought guidance appropriately and brought new insights and a collaborative approach to our client advocacy. He was a team player United Www.

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and was flexible in shifting tasks as more immediate problems arose or as others in the office needed help. He appropriately prioritized his time and carried out all of the matters assigned to him in a timely and complete manner. I would have no hesitation recommending him to other colleagues and I think he has a bright path ahead of him as an advocate for justice.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this letter or need other feedback on Mr. Tartaglia's work here this summer.

Sincerely yours,

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Cc'd by e-mail: Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org