



MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK ■ LEGAL DEPARTMENT
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August 12, 2013

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

Re: Nina Martinez, Intern at Make the Road New York Summer 2013

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing in evaluation of Nina Martinez, who served as a law intern in the Legal Department of Make the Road New York this summer through the support of the Equal Justice America fellowship. I am a Staff Attorney practicing employment law at Make the Road and, together with my colleague Julia Dietz, supervised Nina over the past few months. It is my pleasure to report that she was an exemplary law intern who provided outstanding service to our clients, meaningful support to our attorneys and other advocates, and a generally enthusiastic, eager-to-learn outlook that contributed to a very successful internship.

Make the Road's Legal Department is an extraordinarily dynamic environment and it is a testament to Nina's adaptability, good instincts, and intelligence that she quickly integrated herself into our work. Operating out of our community centers in low-income, immigrant areas, we provide an array of legal services to our 13,000 members in addition to other referrals from outside clinics that we staff. The flow of cases and the constant presence of new and ongoing clients in our offices, where members of the community come to participate, socialize, and benefit from services in an open setting, can be quite demanding – a dynamic that sets us apart from other legal aid offices. Nina dove in with aplomb, getting to know members, organizers, and staff, and accompanying Julia and myself to various settings across our multiple offices and off-site clinic locations in three boroughs despite the hours and distances involved. Nina had a natural ability to connect with our members and demonstrated great sensitivity and instinctive poise in navigating the various challenges of responding to immediate client needs while balancing ongoing projects.

Specifically, the employment team handles a high volume of cases involving wage and hour disputes (including litigation in federal and state court and administrative action at the Department of Labor), unemployment insurance applications and appeals, the consequences of workplace accidents, and an array of other conflicts that arise between low-wage workers and employers in New York. Nina quickly took to learning as much as

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possible about these substantive areas of law and within a very short period of time, Julia and I felt no hesitation about having Nina handle intake interviews and screenings on her own. In close supervision, we worked with Nina on developing a sense of how to assess cases, determine appropriate strategies, and follow up with communication with clients. Through the course of the summer, we could see how Nina, increasingly mastering the fact-gathering and legal analysis required, gained confidence in managing her own list of cases from intake through subsequent steps, like drafting demand letters and complaints. As a result, Nina offered an extremely valuable resource to us, someone to whom we could entrust a fairly high level of responsibility as a legal intern with the assurance that our clients' cases would be handled competently and with care.

In addition, Nina provided legal research assistance in order to support cases that were in active litigation. She delved into emerging and undecided areas of wage and hour law to help us assess the relative strength of our clients' federal and state claims through analysis of statutes, caselaw, and administrative regulations. Nina was thorough in her approach to research assignments, and her grasp of the subject matter and the quality of her legal writing steadily improved over the course of her internship.

Nina was an integral part of our team this summer, and we are grateful to the Equal Justice America Foundation for making it possible for her to assist in our efforts to provide New York City's immigrant workers with quality legal representation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SCK', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Cha-Kim
Staff Attorney