

August 15, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I had a wonderful experience this summer working at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Charlottesville, Virginia. I enjoyed the opportunity to help low-income clients in the community with housing, consumer law and employment issues. I spent most of my time in client meetings, researching and writing, speaking to the housing authority, filing grievances, and attending court.

My proudest achievement of the summer was representing a client in an administrative hearing in front of a Special Examiner of the Virginia Employment Commission. She had been denied employment benefits because the Deputy had determined that she quit her job, when she maintained that she had been let go due to lack of work. Although she had lost her case in front of the Appeals Examiner, I was able to convince the Special Examiner that her testimony should have been credited over her employer's because their testimony changed after their initial statement. I also successfully argued that the employer's leaving policy was ambiguous so should be resolved in favor of the employee. Because of my representation, she was able to claim retroactive unemployment benefits. It was extremely rewarding to be able to help someone in a difficult financial position.

I also had the opportunity to help several clients with landlord and tenant disputes. In one case, a family had fallen behind on their rent payments due to a job loss. The landlord had threatened to conduct a self-help eviction to get them out of their apartment by cutting off the utilities, removing their belongings, and changing the locks. The family acknowledged that they were behind on rent and wanted to repay the money that was owed, but needed more time to find a new place to live to avoid being homeless. I successfully negotiated a resolution to their dispute by forestalling any eviction at all for several more weeks by proposing a manageable repayment plan to the landlord for the tenants' debt. The family, which had several young children, were very grateful for the assistance.

I would have struggled to afford to spend my summer at LAJC without fellowship assistance, so I am extremely appreciative of Equal Justice America's support.

Sincerely,

Amy McKinlay  
J.D. Expected, 2015  
University of Virginia School of Law