

To: Dan Ruben
From: Moriah Schindler
Date: October 18, 2022
Re: EJA Summer 2022 Fellowship Letter

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer I interned at the Urban Justice Center – Safety Net Project. It was overall a very fulfilling and educational experience. The Safety Net Project (SNP) focuses on legal representation for members of the community involved in Bronx housing court. SNP offers free legal services and legal representation and helps members of the community obtain different benefits like ERAP (Emergency Rental Assistance Program). Throughout my summer I worked on a variety of projects, spoke with a variety of clients, and worked under multiple attorneys.

I began my summer working with one attorney regularly collecting data on specific clients. I used our computer database called Legal Server to see what clients had upcoming court dates, to see our client's benefits status, and any other information that my supervising attorney needed during his day-to-day. I spoke with some clients over the phone and helped some clients both apply for benefits and check the progress of their benefits. I did some legal research but only about ERAP benefits. I then attended housing court during the middle of the summer. To prepare for housing court, another intern and I collected all necessary data on the clients appearing in court to make sure our supervising attorney understood what the client was going through and what the status of their potential eviction was. Housing court taught me so much and it was great to see my supervising attorney in action representing clients.

I then began working on a rent strike case. This started from the ground up, as clients from a Harlem apartment building were experiencing uninhabitable living conditions and a lack of maintenance from the landlord. As a result, they were participating in a rent strike and lawsuits had been filed against most of them. We began the rent strike project by talking to each resident involved, locating and collecting their leases, and seeing what the bad conditions were in their apartment. We spoke with each client to see how much rent they were holding onto. We then worked directly with the tenant organization to coordinate an in-person meeting with every resident involved in the rent strike. That took place near the end of the summer, and it was great to see the building and meet all of the strikers in person.

Another large project I worked on near the end of the summer was for a rent overcharge case. It was for the same building involved in the rent strike, but this was to see how much the landlord had been overcharging the rent-stabilized units, which are only allowed to increase a specific number per lease. This had a huge learning curve; there are multiple formulas used to analyze rent histories and determine overcharges. It was a lengthy but fun task and I learned so much doing that work.

Overall, my summer at the SNP was filled with new experiences. I learned so much from all my fellow interns and the multiple attorneys I worked under. I appreciated partaking in so many different projects and attending some meetings and housing court in person. Being a part of the EJA fellowship allowed me to financially support myself throughout the summer which then allowed me to be more present with my internship and less focused on the financial aspect of interning at a non-profit. Thank you, EJA, for the support throughout the summer!

Sincerely,

Moriah Schindler
Brooklyn Law School
Candidate for Juris Doctor 2024