

Annie Keller

September 16, 2022

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, I had the pleasure of working for Legal Aid Chicago in their Children & Families Practice Group. I worked in the general Family Law sub-group, which meant that we worked on domestic violence cases, such as obtaining Orders of Protection for our clients to safeguard them against their abusers, divorces and their many issues, including physical custody agreements and property division.

At Legal Aid Chicago, we serve low-income families in Cook County. When deciding on cases to accept, our practice group prioritized cases where the potential client had some history of experiencing domestic violence as well as cases where a person's housing or financial stability was put at risk because of the legal issue. Due to limited resources and these priorities, Legal Aid Chicago conducts weekly Case Assessment Meetings with the whole practice group to decide which cases we were able to move forward and accept from the intake stage. Interns, including myself, would participate in these meetings by presenting intakes we conducted and answering questions about the facts and issues at stake. Some of the intakes involved extremely difficult facts, including years-long physical abuse of our client and her children, potential loss of the house, negative bank accounts, and more. Many of our clients have very significant, pressing needs. In those cases, being able to present to the case practice group and call the client back to inform them that we accepted their case for representation was incredibly rewarding.

Besides the intake and case assessment work, I engaged in a variety of other tasks. I conducted legal research on variety of topics including procedural requirements, whether social media companies would comply with civil subpoenas, whether statements posted on the internet could be the basis for child protection cases, and more. Additionally, I drafted legal documents including pleadings, Marital Settlement Agreements, and an array of motions. I communicated with clients and kept their case information up to date. I attended court and helped prepare for contested hearings.

Overall, I sincerely feel that I learned more in this ten-week summer about the legal world than I have in my previous two years of law school. It was a memorable summer. I had great support from my two assigned attorneys, and I had wonderful relationships with several of the other interns. I am very glad to have been financially supported by Equal Justice America. I hope to return to Legal Aid Chicago after law school, and I am sure that my experience this summer will improve my chances of making that a reality. Sincerely,

Annie Keller
Loyola University Chicago