

Maddie Xilas

September 12, 2022

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
13540 E Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am currently a third-year Civitas ChildLaw Fellow at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. This past summer, I was able to work at Legal Aid Chicago as a part of their education law team. Equal Justice America generously funded this opportunity, allowing me to continue with my passion for public interest work.

Ever since I started working at Legal Aid Chicago as the Domestic and Sexual Violence Project Coordinator in August of 2019, my goal has been to pursue a career in public interest. As soon as I started working, it was clear to me that the barriers that existed in the legal system for low-income people were almost insurmountable. After beginning law school and learning firsthand just how complicated and convoluted the law can be, it became even more clear to me how important trauma informed and wholistic representation is for people who cannot afford private practice legal assistance.

This past summer at Legal Aid Chicago I was able to confirm my passion both for education law and for direct client service work. In the Spring of 2022, I worked at CAASE to support student-survivors through their college or university Title IX processes, ensuring that they were given appropriate accommodations and able to remain in school. At Legal Aid Chicago this summer, I was able to build on my experiences with Title IX work, drafting OCR complaints and synthesizing the newly-proposed Title IX regulations. I was also able to gain additional experience in both school discipline and disability rights related work. With regards to school discipline work, I drafted demand letters, conducted expulsion hearing preparation, and drafted memos on the Illinois School Code. With regards to the disability rights work, I drafted CSE requests, conducted IEP/504 related record reviews, and observed IEP meetings.

The work that I did on the education law team and at Legal Aid Chicago more generally not only confirmed my commitment to public interest work, but also my want to work at Legal Aid Chicago upon graduation. Because of my summer at Legal Aid Chicago, I am now co-writing fellowship applications with Legal Aid Chicago. The project is partially focused on the education law work I was able to do this summer.

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I cannot overstate my gratitude for the funding I received this past summer.

Sincerely,

Maddie Xilas

Loyola University of Chicago School of Law