

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Mr. Ruben,

My time at LAF in Chicago was the most valuable experience I have had in law school thus far. I was one of 5 interns in the public benefits department. My primary focuses were Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare for Chicago residents living below the poverty line.

While at LAF, I was able to serve a variety of clients from age 3 to 60 and from all different demographics. Many of the clients I interacted with were HIV positive, many suffered from severe physical and mental disabilities and many were homeless.

Unfortunately, I did not get to see the end of many of the cases I worked on, however, knowing that my efforts were helping to impact their lives was extremely meaningful to me. In one case, I was working with the mother of a severely disabled child who was in need of additional durable medical equipment (DME). I worked with the mom to secure the appropriate documents from her doctor and wrote an email explaining why medically this child was in need of additional equipment and how legally she was entitled to them. I researched the law around minors and Medicaid and argued in the email on the behalf of the child based on the law that I found. While my hope is that the outcome was in favor of the child, I am grateful I was able to assist and find a way to help this child. The mother's gratitude for my efforts was a huge reward.

In another case, I was working closely with a paralegal to help a homeless gentleman reapply for Social Security so he could get access to his medicine and get back on his feet. This client was under large amounts of stress and suffered from severe anxiety therefore, prior to helping him, we had to help him calm down. And then we were able to gather legally relevant information to help him with his application. Again, I am unsure of the outcome of this case but I know that we were able to at least attempt to help him fight for his benefits. I was able to see first hand how frustrating this paper work is when someone is suffering from a mental health issue and how important it is to be mindful of the client as a whole and not just their present legal needs.

Lastly, I was able to attend a hearing on behalf of an elderly man from the Middle East. This man had been through a great deal of back and forth with the Social Security office and was extremely frustrated and was requesting back payment for when his benefits were temporarily cut off. I was able to learn about his culture, work with a translator and help prepare documents for his hearing. I was able to

observe his hearing and see the arguments my supervisor developed executed. This experience taught me the importance of taking culture and language barriers into consideration when working with and for clients. His gratitude for our willingness to help after years of being frustrated by the system meant so much to me. He was okay with whatever the out come was as long as he knew someone was genuinely on his side. It was a pleasure fighting on his behalf.

My time at LAF was a personal and professional experience that I will value forever. I learned about people, the law, economics, and how the medical field intersects with the law. This internship solidified in my mind that public interest law is what I want to practice in the future. There is nothing more valuable than hearing a heartfelt thank you from a worried mom or a hug from a client who knows that you did your absolute best for them. I love using the skills I have learned to fight for our most vulnerable citizens and I plan to do that for the remainder of my career.

Thank you for helping me pursue my dreams and equip me with support to help Chicago.

Best,

Lindsay Ayers  
Chicago-Kent College of Law



Equal justice starts here.

August 31, 2016

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
Building II, Suite 204  
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Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am the Director of the Public Benefits Practice Group at LAF. As a direct supervisor for Lindsay during her summer at LAF, I can confidently say that she is a hard worker with a passion for Legal Aid. Lindsay was eager to work on any project regardless of whether it aligned directly with her interests and produced quality work. She worked with a variety of attorneys and was able to adapt quickly to their unique styles. Lindsay worked efficiently and effectively on multiple projects at one time.

Lindsay researched Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare law to help create arguments for hearings and appeals. She drafted emails to send to administrative agencies on behalf of clients and drafted letters to accompany waivers to assist clients whose benefits were being cut off because of an alleged Social Security overpayment. She gathered legally relevant information on cases for multiple attorneys and created spread sheets and timelines to ensure attorneys had an accurate summary of the fact. She spoke with multiple clients to answer questions, request important information, clarify confusing facts and reassure clients we were working hard on their behalf.

Lindsay also attended an administrative hearing and assisted with the preparation for that hearing by organizing documents and information spanning several years. She helped with Client intakes and assisted one of our paralegals with helping client reapply for Social Security. She also assisted me when working with clients and translators.

It was a pleasure to have Lindsay at LAF this summer and her work was much appreciated by our clients and staff.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CC", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carrie Chapman  
Director, Public Benefits Practice Group  
LAF  
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