

Mr. Ruben,

I interned in the housing unit at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) this summer. Prior to law school I worked as a housing search worker for families in shelter at a housing organization. I always had to refer the difficult cases to GBLS and work with them in an effort to find housing for my clients. I was amazed with what they were able to do from the legal side that I did not yet have the tools or knowledge to do. This summer I was able to work with the attorneys doing what I had previously only been able to observe. It was so incredible being on the legal side and applying the knowledge and skills I learned in my first year of law school and I am still excited to continue to improve and learn more.

I was able to work with several attorneys on different projects and cases, mainly focusing on issues with families and public housing or section 8 housing. I was able to argue at two administrative hearings at the local housing authority. These two hearings were my favorite projects of the summer. I was able to take the research and writing skills I learned in my first year of law school and apply them to a real case, affecting real people. It was a real glimpse into the power of law and how much more I will be able to do for clients once I have a legal degree.

The first hearing was regarding a family who was denied from public housing because my client had previously lived in the housing authority with her own mother, under her mother's lease, and they had been evicted. The housing authority denied my client for the eviction of her mother based off of a poor landlord reference. According to the housing authority's administrative plan, they can only deny an applicant housing based on a previous eviction if the applicant was then the head of household or if the housing authority can demonstrate that the applicant contributed to the reason for the eviction. My client did not contribute to the reason for the eviction and we demonstrated this at the hearing. We won the hearing and my client was returned to the waitlist to continue her screening with the housing authority. This was a great feeling for me because, having worked previously at shelters, I know that when a family loses out on a housing opportunity at the local housing authority, they end up with very few options and an extraordinarily long wait for housing.

This internship was an amazing experience and I enjoyed the work, environment, and attorneys so much that I am returning in the fall two days a week to work on another part of the housing unit and learn more about eviction issues. I am very thankful to Equal Justice America for funding my internship at GBLS and helping to make my first legal internship an amazing one. I learned a great deal and I know I can still learn a lot more as I continue in law school towards a career in public interest.

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