

Mr. Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
Building II- Suite 204
13540 Eat Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my gratitude for the Fellowship Grant funding I received this past fall from Equal Justice America. With this funding, I was able to participate in an externship with Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto, (CLSEPA) a non-profit legal services provider serving the low-income individuals and families in the East Palo Alto, California community. CLSEPA is a wonderful organization, representing clients in immigration, housing, anti-predatory lending and home mortgage foreclosure prevention, and consumer protection.

Throughout my externship, I was assigned to the Immigration section of the organization. I had a truly wonderful experience at CLSEPA, and learned valuable skills while being able to give back to the community. I was able to work on cases for several actual clients, and learned from a variety of experiences and challenges. In general, I worked on U-Visa applications. U Visas are available for undocumented persons that have been the victim of a qualifying crime, and have assisted a law enforcement agency in the investigation or prosecution of the crime. The clients served by CLSEPA have been the victims of crimes, but often do not have the requisite resources or legal experience to apply for a U-Visa on their own.

One case in particular stuck out to me in my time at CLSEPA. The case involved a client who had been the victim of kidnapping and rape, and had escaped from captors after several days being held in a home in an unfamiliar city. Unfortunately, because of some of the challenges in the case, the attorney working on the case felt that a U-Visa might not be an appropriate path to pursue. However, both the attorney and I did not want to just tell the client we were out of options. The attorney was interested in whether or not another kind of visa I had not worked on before—a T-Visa—might be a better approach to attaining status for the client. I was tasked with learning about the facts of the client's case, and doing legal research on T-Visa application procedure and precedent. I wrote a memo applying the facts for the client to T-Visa precedent. Based on this

memo, the attorney decided that we would go forward with the T-Visa. With hope, our application will be successful and the client will be granted status. This provided really valuable and practical legal research experience that I was very grateful for, and gave the client a better chance at obtaining legal status.

Another case I worked on involved trying to piece together a challenging U-Visa application for a client. In order to apply for a U-Visa, an applicant needs to demonstrate they have been the victim of a crime in the U.S. Usually, in applying for a U-Visa, we would get a police report, and have the police agency sign a Supplement B Certification that the client had been helpful in the investigation of a crime. One particular case, however, was much more challenging than the rest. Our client told us about a crime that had been committed in another state, and more than a decade ago. That was the only information we had, without details as to the specific location, or jurisdiction of the crime. In order to apply for a U-Visa for the client, we would need to find documentation of the crime. I started by cold-calling law enforcement agencies and courts. Several times I was met with frustrating answers and even hang-ups. However, after many attempts, I was able to navigate the system and locate records regarding the crime our client had been the victim of. Without these records, we would have been unable to pursue a U-Visa for the client. This definitely helped in the client's case, and provided me with an opportunity to work directly with law enforcement and navigating the obscure world of criminal and court records.

These two clients serve as examples of the wide-ranging cases and challenges I was able to work on in my externship experience. I learned so much from the various legal problems we sought to address, and gained real-world knowledge about client interactions and the legal system that I will definitely build upon going forward. This experience was both valuable, and highly rewarding, because of the positive effects I was able to see my work having on the clients' cases. I am grateful for the support from CLSEPA and Equal Justice America; without this support, I would not have been able to participate in the externship, and have the wonderful and meaningful experiences I did!

Sincerely,
Katherine McBride
Stanford Law School; Class of 2015