

September 8, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I had the pleasure of interning at Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. I worked at their Northwest Office where they represent people in a wide spectrum of civil matters, including those involving housing issues, family law, public benefits, employment discrimination, bankruptcy law, and consumer law. Throughout my internship I was assigned a variety of assignments that touched on all of these different civil legal matters.

Interning at this agency, I was given the opportunity to talk to clients on a daily basis to keep them updated on their civil cases. In order to provide the most adequate legal assistance I gathered necessary information to move their cases forward and solve their legal problems. For example, many times I had to contact the Social Security Administration Office to inquire on client's benefits and ensure that they were being paid. Other times I had to go to the Illinois Department of Employment Security to pick up or review client's files in order for the attorney's to accurately appeal decisions made on their wrongfully terminated employment cases.

I also had the opportunity to conduct in person case intakes in which I obtained important facts and issues on people's potential civil cases. After conducting these intakes I presented the cases at team meetings in order for the agency to determine whether legal representation could be provided. Conducting these intakes exposed me to real life legal issues and made me realize how intertwined many of these matters are, therefore learning how to spot the most crucial issues and focusing on those that I knew the agency would be able to help with. Many of the case intakes I conducted that were later accepted by the agency and assigned to me to assist in the case, gave me the opportunity to build close relationships with the clients from beginning to end. Many of these clients depended on my help and simply appreciated the fact that I was always available to listen to them and answer questions about their case. Not only did I assist clients by talking to them and answering questions, I also drafted a variety of court motions, which I later filed at the Daley Center.

Interning at this agency was very rewarding because it confirmed my passion in helping underprivileged people. It made me realize that through legal assistance I can really fight for these individuals' rights and empower them through equal justice.

Very Truly Yours,

Lizette Jaramillo

Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America

RE: Lizette Jaramillo

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Lizette Jaramillo spent her summer as a law clerk with the Legal Assistance Foundation's Northwest Office, where I am a supervisory attorney. I am writing to tell you about the exemplary work that Lizette provided to me and my staff attorneys over the summer. As you will see, we kept Lizette quite busy.

Even though Lizette had just completed her first year of law school and could not, therefore, represent clients in court, she performed a full array of other law clerking duties. She assisted one staff attorney, Sarah, with an unemployment case that required several calls to an administrative appeals unit in order to track down certain, relevant documents. Sarah was impressed with Lizette's ability to deal with bureaucracies. Sarah reports that Lizette seems to have a unique ability to get what she wants from bureaucrats, a very important skill in providing legal services to the poor. Similarly, Lizette tracked down a good contact person at the Social Security Administration to figure out why a client was being charged with an overpayment. Again, her ability to cut through the red tape enabled us to assess the merits of the case and give the client accurate information.

Lizette's bilingual skills came in handy. She worked with several of our Spanish speaking clients. In one such case, Lizette helped to prepare a TRO regarding the dissipation of marital assets. In another such case, Lizette prepared a motion to compel discovery answers. Personally, I used Lizette to interpret for a Spanish speaking client whose husband owned over 20 parcels of property and whose divorce case was, accordingly, very complicated. Lizette was a great help to me in dealing with the client and in organizing charts regarding the distribution of the assets.

Finally, Lizette worked on several random tasks: issuing subpoenas, calculating child support arrears, calling witnesses, investigating cases, drafting pleadings and motions, conducting research, contacting pension boards to obtain QDRO information, drafting QDROs (orders regarding the division of a pension), interviewing clients, filing pleadings, and so on. Overall, the quality of her work was excellent. She is conscientious, timely, and asks questions appropriately. Lizette was a joy to have in the office this summer and we appreciate very much that she was given funding by Equal Justice America to work here.

Sincerely,

Jennifer J. Payne  
Supervisory Attorney