

Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I want to thank you and EJA so much for the grant that made it possible for me to work at Prairie State Legal Services this summer. I loved my experience immensely, and I became close to the wonderful attorneys I worked with. I was able to work in multiple areas of law, including elder law, housing, and public benefits. I worked on many of the staff attorneys' cases in several capacities (research, client interviews, investigations), but my favorites were the cases in which I had the most client contact.

I was assigned a client for whom I was the primary contact. She was having a difficult time obtaining a Section 8 housing voucher because the housing authority claimed she owed them money, although they had lost her file and had no idea what the money was for. She was in danger of becoming homeless and called me frequently, especially because the housing authority was really dragging behind in scheduling her hearing. I sent numerous messages to the housing authority and the housing authority's attorney to get the hearing scheduled, and I researched all the HUD and local rules on hearings in order to put together a persuasive argument as to why the client's hearing should be scheduled sooner. The client had a disability and several recent deaths in her family, and suffered from depression. Sometimes when she called, it seemed like she really needed someone to talk to outside of her legal problems, so I would listen to what was going on in her life and try to lend a sympathetic ear.

The client I liked working with the most was an elderly man in a wheelchair who I drafted affidavits and motions for and also helped an attorney do investigative work for. There was an accidental fire in his public-housing apartment that caused minimal damage, but the landlords wanted him to pay \$10,000 or face eviction, even though the client was moving to another apartment anyway. It was a vindictive move to try to make it difficult for the client to get into public housing again, and of course our client did not have \$10,000. I had gone back to school before the client's hearing, but the attorney I worked for contacted me to let me know that he won!

All in all, my experience at Prairie State was wonderful, and I am so grateful to you for making it possible.

Sincerely,
Rachel Rasp
Cornell Law Class of 2016