

Maya Cherayil
Neighborhood Legal Services Program
EJA 2018

EJA Report

As I near the end of my summer, I have had time to reflect on my time at Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP). I began working at NLSP immediately following my first year at Boston College Law School. During my time at NLSP I worked in the Barriers to Employment Unit (“Barriers”). In Barriers I primarily worked on record sealing with individuals with old criminal records that are now preventing them from finding employment. I also drafted complaints for violations of the Fair Credit in Employment Amendment Act, and researched resources for reentering citizens.

To complete the record sealing work, I participated in client intakes, attended record sealing clinics, and learned how to draft affidavits and record sealing motions. As I had no previous experience with barriers to employment, every day was a learning experience. During my time at NLSP I have been able to not only assist attorneys, but to interact with and help clients directly.

I was particularly impressed with the way that the staff attorneys would go out of their way to provide the most convenient, supportive, and effective legal advice and information they could. For instance, one client had many children of different ages and was always balancing child care, work, and working on her legal matters. The attorney I worked with was so understanding of her needs and very sensitive and supportive during an important, but stressful, interview.

During my time at NLSP, I was lucky enough to be able to observe the other units at the organization – the Family Law Unit and the Housing Unit. I was able to sit in on court for both

family law and housing law matters. Additionally, I had the chance to research third-party custody agreements in Washington, D.C. and learn more about custody and family law proceedings.

I learned throughout the summer that working at NLSP, and in public interest law in general, requires not only an excellent knowledge of the law, but also a compassionate soul.



August 21, 2018

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

RE: Evaluation of Maya Cherayil's EJA-supported summer internship

Dear Ms. Ruben and Equal Justice America:

Thank you for funding the exceptional work of Maya Cherayil, who interned at Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP) this summer in the Barriers to Employment practice. Maya expanded our organization's capacity this summer to serve low-income jobseekers in the District of Columbia facing various legal barriers to employment.

In addition to conducting research on many of the legal issues that arise in the Barriers to Employment practice, Maya worked directly on multiple criminal record sealing cases throughout the summer, drafting affidavits and motions which will enable our clients to reduce or eliminate the existence of a publicly available criminal history. Maya was also instrumental to the success of the "Fresh Start Legal Clinic," which took place on July 18th at a local law firm and channeled the work of pro bono attorneys to help clients with record sealing motions. She helped to collect records, contact clients, and coordinate the clinic logistics in advance of the clinic to help it run smoothly and ensure maximum participation.

Maya jumped right in to NLSP's work with enthusiasm, a wonderful attitude, commitment to the organization's mission, and impressive skill. Her presence at NLSP truly did make a difference for our organization and allow us to reach more clients this summer. Due to her own initiative, Maya also used the time to learn about the entire range of services offered at NLSP. My hope and belief is that the experience will have a positive impact on her legal career.

Many thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maya Sheppard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Maya Sheppard
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