

August 1, 2018

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer I worked as an intern for Legal Services of Northern Virginia. LSNV serves the five counties in Virginia bordering Washington DC. While this area is generally considered to be affluent, I witnessed firsthand the wealth disparities in this region and the difficulties that lower-income residents face.

I worked on both family law and consumer law cases this summer. I worked closely with my attorney supervisor to conduct intake interviews with victims of family abuse and helped prepare for their Protective Order hearings. These victims often suffered from trauma and have been in abusive and controlling relationships for years; filing for a Protective Order is usually their first step towards self-empowerment. I conducted intake interviews for clients who spoke Spanish and Urdu and had to learn a new set of vocabulary to explain the legal system. The cases were often heartbreakingly sad, and I sat in the courtroom while the judges would spend less than fifteen minutes listening to the victims' stories and rule against them. While I am still passionate about finding solutions for victims of family abuse, I find it hard to believe that there is much justice in the court system.

Consumer law cases, while often just as sad, were enjoyable because there was often a slew of remedies available to our clients. Many of our clients were collection proof and others were able to negotiate with their creditors to pay back a lower balance. We also held bankruptcy clinics to evaluate possible clients for bankruptcy eligibility. I really enjoyed learning the law in these cases and by the end of the summer was able to anticipate what advice the attorney would give clients.

I truly enjoyed my team here at LSNV, as I was able to support my community while getting hands-on litigation experience in a smaller court system. The EJA Grant supported me financially throughout the summer, and the staff at EJA sent out regular emails of support and partnered us with mentors. I have had a great experience these past few months, and now look forward to heading back to school!

Sincerely,
Hamna Ahmad
University of Virginia School of Law



August 14, 2018

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to you today to provide feedback about Hamna Ahmad, a 2018 Recipient of Equal Justice America Law Student Fellowship. Ms. Ahmad was an intern in the Leesburg office of Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) this past summer.

LSNV is a non-profit public interest law firm that offers free legal assistance to low-income individuals. Our mission is to provide high quality legal assistance to elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals facing the loss of a critical need. LSNV attorneys practice in the area of consumer law, elder law, family law, housing law, public benefits, and support for re-entry for those finishing their criminal sentences.

Ms. Ahmad worked with the family law and consumer law attorneys at LSNV. Her primary duties included researching case law and state statutes, as well as assisting with client interviews. She also volunteered with our pro bono attorneys at various community clinics. One of Ms. Ahmad's assignment's this year was a mock trial in front of a Fairfax County Judge. She worked with the attorneys and her intern team to prepare for trial with a quick turnaround.

Ms. Ahmad is a brilliant and creative thinker, and a relentless problem solver. For example, the consumer attorney had a case in litigation that needed a handwriting expert by a certain deadline. Ms. Ahmad looked up the names of potential experts, contacted them, compared costs, and made an excellent recommendation who did the work for free. She asked the client appropriate questions regarding the circumstances surrounding the signing of the document in question. She also researched the adverse party's expert and found information on his website that could be used for impeachment purposes. Sponsoring public service provides the most poor and vulnerable in our communities with access to the justice system when in danger of domestic violence, the denial of critical benefits such as Medicaid and Social Security, eviction from a nursing home, and losing custody of their children to an abusive parent. Facing



such problems without a lawyer can be disastrous. Our clients are typically under a lot of stress. Ms. Ahmad was always kind and courteous to our clients. She treated them with respect and dignity. She never criticized or judged them for being in a difficult situation. She was a true professional.

It was an absolute pleasure to work with Ms. Ahmad and we are so grateful for the service she provided to our community, and for the Equal Justice America Law Student Fellowship and its supporters.

Sincerely,

Beth McCord