

July 8, 2018

Clare Balawajder  
Internship Paper for Equal Justice America

I am a part-time, third-year law student at Regent University School of Law in Virginia Beach, Virginia. I interned at the Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia in their Williamsburg, Virginia office from May 21 through July 3. My supervisor was the attorney in the office, Mr. Darryl Cunningham. There were two other law students interning in the office. The Williamsburg office focuses primarily on family law.

I enjoyed my time as an intern at the Legal Aid office. The work was challenging but at the same time very rewarding. I was happy to serve the less fortunate and assist in providing them with quality legal help. I learned a great deal about applying the law versus simply learning the law in law school classes. This experience has been invaluable to me.

I was able to perform several tasks during my internship. Reviewing and organizing client files was one ongoing task. I also corresponded with clients via telephone and email regarding paperwork and information that was needed in order to prepare for hearings. For a divorce case, I prepared and sent paperwork for spousal support to the Department of Defense. I prepared an expense sheet for a hearing on spousal support and learned about spousal support guidelines. I also drafted client correspondence.

I also had the opportunity to meet with clients along with an attorney for various legal needs. One day three separate clients came in to sign wills, powers of attorney, and advanced medical directives. Sitting in on these meetings was very

instructive to me. I learned how to present a legal document such as a will to client. I observed the attorney carefully going through each section of the document, making sure the client understood each part before moving on. I was also interested in how client's questions were fielded by attorneys. The interaction with the client and the time that was taken with each of them was instructive as well. I also observed a client being prepped for a hearing, which was an entirely different type of interaction with a client.

With the guidance of Mr. Cunningham, I prepared a will, advanced medical directive, and power of attorney for a client using questionnaires the client filled out. I also prepared a memo for Mr. Cunningham concerning legal changes in spousal support in Virginia and how these changes might impact a client's case. I also was able to go to juvenile and domestic court in Williamsburg and observe several cases including a client represented by our office.

Every task in the Legal Aid office contributed to the success of the office as a whole. I copied files and filed paperwork in clients' files as well as mailed several letters for clients whose cases were closed.

Everyone deserves quality legal assistance. The Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia certainly provides a much-needed service to the community. I am honored to have been part of this effort to help those in need of legal assistance in the area of family law during the summer of 2018. I look forward to interning there again next summer.