



August 28, 2018

Re: Equal Justice America  
Evaluation for Jyoti Gill

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter in support of Jyoti Gill, recipient of the Equal Justice America fellowship. I am a Supervising Attorney at the East Bay Community Law Center (“EBCLC”), which is a clinic of UC Berkeley, School of Law.

Jyoti was a clinical student in EBCLC’s Community Economic Justice Clinic (“CEJ”) this past summer, from May through August 2018. CEJ is a transactional clinic with a mission of advancing people-oriented economic development and empowering low-income communities of color to build long-term solutions to poverty in the East Bay. Under the supervision of CEJ attorneys, students provide advice and representation to entrepreneurs, small businesses, and non-profits. They also present community education workshops at our legal clinics and engage in policy advocacy at the local level to advance the protection, preservation, and production of affordable housing.

This past summer, Jyoti worked with four business clients, on a policy matter concerning community benefits agreements, and on an educational workshop about cooperative business structures. She conducted extensive legal research and produced a number of memos for our clients to equip them with knowledge about the benefits and risks of different business structures.

One memo that Jyoti wrote for a business client involved the legal requirements for setting up a cooperative corporation in California. This was the same topic for her educational workshop that she presented and delivered at one of our legal clinics. Jyoti wrote another memo about potential risks to a non-profit client’s tax-exempt status should they contract with for-profit entities, and provided them with recommendations for protecting their tax-exempt status. This memo involved a novel legal research question that required Jyoti to conduct extensive research and even consult with a law firm for additional guidance.

Jyoti produced another memo for a business client about the impacts that the business income could have on the sole owner’s public benefits. This memo was particularly useful because it highlighted the need for the sole owner, a low-income entrepreneur, to shift course and consider a different tax structure that would better suit their unique needs. For this same client, Jyoti also researched the licenses and permits that were legally required to operate a catering business. Notably, Jyoti prepared a checklist as an appendix to this legal memo to assist the client in securing the required licenses and permits, thus facilitating legal compliance.

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Every CEJ client is different, and Jyoti proved herself to be a quick learner as she navigated legal research assignments for different clients with diverse legal needs. Jyoti is also a strong writer and an effective communicator. Her memos were well-researched, organized, and clearly written. She effectively incorporated feedback from supervisors into her final written work product. Jyoti also met internal deadlines with ease and communicated with her supervisors when she had questions or needed an extension.

In addition to providing legal assistance to business clients, Jyoti worked on a policy matter in which she drafted language for a model Community Benefits Agreement ordinance. This ordinance requires developers to engage and negotiate with local communities who are impacted by new development projects. As part of this project, Jyoti acted as CEJ's liaison to one of our non-profit legal partners. This project required Jyoti to participate in coalition meetings and to communicate back and forth between the non-profit partner and the CEJ team. Through this collaboration, Jyoti conducted extensive research and drafted a joint memo on recommendations for a Community Benefits Agreement ordinance. These thorough and well-research recommendations have shaped the ordinance and will contribute to land-use measures on a national scale. Jyoti demonstrated maturity, particularly as a 1L student, in her ability to communicate with community partners and coalitions. She effectively expressed her opinions and explained her findings during meetings. Overall, Jyoti always provided critical and thoughtful reflections that helped to move the work forward.

This past summer was incredibly busy season for CEJ. Having a student law clerk as competent and responsible as Jyoti was invaluable for our clinic. We know that Jyoti is off to a great start in her legal career and we look forward to witnessing her continued growth and success as an advocate.

I would be happy to answer any further questions that you may have about her. Please feel free to call me at 510-269-6614.

Sincerely,



Seema Rupani  
Attorney Fellow  
Community Economic Justice Clinic