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Dan Ruben
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Dear Mr. Ruben,

I would first like to thank EJA for facilitating the opportunity to work with Bread for the City this past summer. During the summer, I provided research support for my supervising attorney as well as other family and landlord-tenant attorneys as needed. I also provided client intake support for legal clinic walk-ins every Monday morning and shadowed attorneys during client intakes in the afternoons. During the walk-ins, I gathered basic demographic information in order to determine whether we could assist with the client's legal issue, whether there in fact was a legal issue, whether there was a conflict with another legal clinic client, and whether we had assisted this particular client in the past.

One of the first assignments I worked on was a client who owed several thousand dollars to her landlord and was looking to negotiate a settlement and move-out agreement. After sitting in on the intake at the landlord-tenant court, I helped draft a potential settlement agreement and sat in on a meeting with the property manager. After determining that a property manager could not properly represent a landlord in court, the judge decided to grant a continuance.

I also had the opportunity to assist with home visits with clients when housing conditions were an important element of the case. I was able to complete one visit in a case where the landlord claimed a tenant was owing three months' rent. In addition to going over statements with the tenant which showed that she did not in fact owe any rent but had made the payments piecemeal due to issues with her employer, I completed a report on the unit's conditions in order to develop defenses for the tenant. After observing that the air conditioning unit was leaking, the kitchen contained mold and was infested with insects, and the floorboards were severely warped, I assisted my supervising attorney with preparing defenses for the tenant. Luckily, the landlord decided during the second court proceeding to drop the claim for possession.

Lastly, I was able to participate in an administrative appeal with the District of Columbia Housing Authority when a client's subsidized housing voucher was wrongly terminated. Due to several administrative errors on the part of both the housing authority and the landlord, the tenant was never made aware that her recertification documents were missing, nor was she informed of the steps she needed to take in order to rectify her situation. When the landlord brought a suit for possession, I worked on a motion to join the housing authority, arguing that both it and the landlord's mistakes led to the nonpayment of rent and the case could not be resolved without the housing authority. Before I left, I was able to begin the process of reinstating the client's voucher, as the housing authority's own documentation showed that its administrative errors adversely affected our client.

I would again like to thank EJA for providing me this unique opportunity this summer. I am proud to be an EJA fellow, and hope donors continue to support this wonderful program so that future aspiring attorneys can take advantage of the public service opportunities available to them.

Sincerely,

Toye Adenekan