



Summer 2019 EJA Fellow:

Name: Isaac Kaplan

Law School: New York University

Fellowship: Mobilization for Justice

Entry 1:

The last two weeks at the new Bronx office of Mobilization for Justice have been a whirlwind introduction to housing law in New York City. The incredible lawyers in this office play a crucial role in delivering on the promise of the city's Universal Access to Counsel initiative, a program aimed at guaranteeing free legal assistance to all low-income New Yorkers facing eviction. My varied work in support of the attorneys and our clients has so far included intake at Bronx Housing court, legal research on what is required to make out a case of fraudulent rent increases, and developing trial strategy (figuring out witnesses, evidence, etc) for an upcoming case. All of this is happening at an exciting time, as New York just passed sweeping new rent reforms that are an important step in a long and continuing effort to empower vulnerable tenants.

Entry 2:

It has been a busy few weeks in housing court. Since my last update, I have continued to work in support of the attorneys here in the Bronx office of Mobilization for Justice. The work has included writing subpoenas and having them signed by a judge, drafting a direct and cross examination for an upcoming trial, and even writing and filing my first motion (an order to show cause that temporarily halted an eviction). Throughout it all I also continue to do intake in Housing Court, seeing first-hand how Universal Access to Counsel can help people, especially those who come into court not realizing they're entitled to a free lawyer.

Entry 3:

It has been a busy and exciting few weeks. Home visits are a big part of housing practice, and this week I went with an attorney to the home of a client to wait for landlord and the building's super to arrive and make needed repairs to the client's apartment. It is far from unheard of for a landlord who has agreed to make repairs on a certain date to simply send no one, then claim in court the tenant was not home. Having a lawyer take the time to wait with a tenant ensures this won't happen. In this case, the super did arrive, but the apartment requires



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repairs that will take days, if not weeks. I also worked with another client ahead of her abatement hearing, drafting a motion and affidavit in support of her claim. This week, a judge will decide whether conditions in her apartment are so detrimental to her health and safety that the landlord essentially owes her a discount on the rent.

Entry 4:

Work did not slow down during my final week at MFJ! I finished a memo examining the impact of the new rent regulations on overcharge complaints. The new laws go a long way to making sure that tenants are empowered to enforce their right to pay a legally-set rent, and are not overcharged. I also finished a motion to preclude certain evidence that the other side has yet to turn over despite a judge's order. All in all it was a great end to a great summer.