

August 15, 2021

Dan Ruben
Equal Justice America
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Midlothian, VA 23112
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Dear Mr. Ruben,

This summer, I had the opportunity to work as a summer law clerk at the Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i (LASH). LASH is the largest public interest law firm in Hawai'i, with over 100 staff members in their 11 offices on all major islands. LASH provides services primarily to low-income individuals who otherwise would not be able to afford to retain a private attorney as well as senior citizens. The firm's primary practice areas include family law, landlord-tenant, and public benefits.

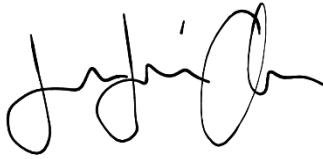
During my time as a law clerk, I was fortunate to be able to experience different practice areas within the firm. I conducted research and drafted memos on eviction defense, as well as when someone can appeal the decision of an administrative agency (such as a state agency's decision to deny unemployment benefits) to the state courts. One thing that was most rewarding was that one of my research memos was used to draft a brief in support of a motion to dismiss, submitted by LASH attorneys on behalf of an elderly client in an eviction case. It was truly rewarding to see my legal research being used to prepare a paper that was filed with the court, directly helping that client. I also assisted LASH's kupuna (elder) intake hotline by speaking with senior citizens seeking LASH services and determining whether their situation was something that LASH helps with, as well as offering general legal information that might be relevant to their situation. Many times, the callers wanted more information about legal processes that particularly implicate seniors, such as how to get a power of attorney or an advanced healthcare directive. This work was also incredibly valuable to me because it gave me the experience of directly interacting with potential clients, which improved my skill of spotting the legal issues impacting potential clients as well as being able to communicate complex legal concepts in a way that non-lawyers would understand. Additionally, I wrote updated resources on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities in light of an update to Hawai'i's eviction law that was signed into law by the governor over the summer.

The clerkship also offered many learning opportunities to benefit the law clerks in our future careers. Each week, the Executive Director of the organization hosted "Tuesday Talks," where she invited LASH staff members (and on one occasion, a local judge) to talk to the clerks about their experiences in the legal field and how they got to where they were in their careers. It was refreshing to see that each staff member was passionate about the work they were doing to help the community. Law clerks were also invited to attend the organization's occasional "lunch and learns," which were short presentations during the day about a specific substantive legal topic. Further, we were assigned books to read throughout the summer that discussed local culture and social issues that were particularly relevant to our clients. A significant portion of LASH's clients are Native Hawaiian, and thus many of the books focused on Hawaiian issues. After we

finished reading the books, we met to discuss our thoughts on the book, especially our thoughts from a legal perspective.

All-in-all, my clerkship that I was able to experience with the help of Equal Justice America's summer stipend was invaluable. It reaffirmed my desire to work in public interest after graduation, gave me an opportunity to apply what I learned in class to a practical setting, and honed my communication skills with clients. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joshua Abeyta'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and a prominent 'A'.

Joshua Abeyta

Santa Clara University