

September 13, 2010

Mr. Dan Ruben
Executive Director, Equal Justice America
Building II – Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Rd.
Midlothian, VA 23112

RE: Intern Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Refugee and Immigration Services, now a program of Commonwealth Catholic Charities of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond since a merger was completed on July 1, 2010, has been happy to have Katie Turner as a Legal Intern for the summer of 2010. The work of the immigration legal program in Roanoke, Virginia is devoted exclusively to the practice of immigration law with the United States Department of State, the United States Department of Justice and the United States Department of Homeland Security within that department the bulk of cases are with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (USICE) in the role of defense counsel.

During this internship, Ms. Turner worked on the following types of cases:
VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) case: Her responsibilities included taking extensive verbal testimony that resulted in detailed declarations of the victim and witnesses to the abuse suffered by the victim, assembling documentary evidence including police reports, court records, medical reports, psychological reports and photos to corroborate the testimony given. She was also responsible for extensive revision of declarations as English is almost always the clients' second language. I would not have taken two of these cases without Ms. Turner. VAWA cases demand considerable time and without assistance we can only help a small number of the victims.

Following **Temporary Protected Status** for Haitians approved by the government after the January earthquake, Ms. Turner worked specifically on one case in need of a waiver based on fraud. Her responsibilities included interviewing the client to gather necessary information, researching the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Haiti, preparing affidavits, and completing the necessary waiver paperwork under the supervision of counsel.

In response to a particularly challenging **Request for Evidence and Rebuttal** for a marriage fraud case, Ms. Turner did extensive research as well as conducted several interviews with the client in order to prepare a detailed statement-by-statement review and rebuttal to the points raised by USCIS.

Refugee cases:

Ms. Turner's responsibilities included meeting with refugees to obtain additional evidence and information needed for the completion of a case, updating and maintaining the Excel spreadsheet tracking these cases, data entry, preparing letters to obtain additional documentary needs and reviewing the cases prior to final review by counsel. During her internship she reviewed approximately 114 cases, of which about 60 percent involved children and about 5 percent involved the elderly or disabled. Of the refugee cases, all were either reduced fee or pro bono. We would not have been able to take about 25% of these cases without Ms. Turner.

Additional aspects of the internship:

By the end of her internship, Ms. Turner was capable of preparing a variety of USCIS documents including forms necessary for family immigration and adjustment of status to permanent resident and U.S. citizen. Further, she became educated in several human rights and domestic violence cases. She became comfortable interviewing and working with clients on an individual basis with the supervision of counsel. She became familiar with the best practices, ethics and procedures as outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act for attorneys and BIA Accredited Representatives and additional procedures recommended by the Virginia Bar Association and CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.). Ms. Turner was also able to attend CLINIC web seminars — trainings equivalent to 1.5 hours of continued legal education.

How her work assisted this office in the administration of justice

Because of Ms. Turner's ability to learn quickly and her excellent writing abilities, by the middle of the internship when she had learned the format required for different types of documents to submit, there was little need for revision, thus saving this office considerable time. She prepared legal documents, written testimony, corroborated evidence and did considerable research, especially in criminal cases.

This office was able to focus on other services including extensive pro bono work with legal aid and pro bono attorneys researching immigration consequences of criminal cases so that the defense counsel could come up with the best possible options for their clients; sometimes lengthy telephone consultations with inmates under an I.C.E. detainer (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in local jails and those in immigration detention centers. We were able to accept two additional VAWA cases that otherwise would have been turned away or put on a long waiting list; we were able to provide more community outreach not only in the Roanoke, Virginia metro area but also to various entities and shelters for abuse victims in the regions stretching from around Lynchburg, Virginia to the far southwestern parts of the state. This outreach includes distribution of manuals for shelter staff and legal aid and/or pro bono attorneys to teach them how to prepare a VAWA petition and how to work with this office in the initial analysis of the case to determine if the client has a case under the law, and then teaches the individual how the immigration legal system works with these types of cases.

Additionally, we were able to offer sizable fee reductions of our already very low fees to all of our VAWA cases and a number of low income clients.

Since the immigration legal program in Roanoke, Virginia was cut by 50 percent last year due to losses in funding, it is only through interns and volunteers that we are able to provide a high level of services to those most in need. Ms. Turner proved to be a tremendous asset to our office. During her time here she managed to close several Refugee Adjustment of Status cases, meet with multiple refugees to complete their green card applications and update our refugee database so that it was no longer backlogged. Ms. Turner's interaction with the clients was such that others in our office noticed her sincerity and eagerness to help those who needed assistance. Her desire to learn and work hard as well as her ability to engage with clients on a level in which they understood their circumstances will truly make her an excellent attorney.

Sincerely,

J. David Maxey
BIA Accredited Representative/ Full