

Aug. 10, 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I wanted to write you to thank you again for selecting me for an Equal Justice America fellowship, which allowed me to continue working with Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project (MiUIP), an organization I began working with my first year law school. My summer work with MiUIP as a law clerk proved to be an excellent experience, providing me with both valuable legal experience and an opportunity to help those in need.

My work with the MiUIP has allowed me to participate in an organization that provides a valuable legal service for the poor in a state with the highest unemployment rate in the country. Through the MiUIP, law students provide advice and representation to jobless workers in Michigan seeking Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. I am now trained to give free legal assistance to unemployed workers who are filing UI claims or whose UI claims for unemployment benefits have been denied. By assisting unemployed workers in bringing their UI claims and obtaining benefits, I, along with my fellow student attorneys, provide much-needed help to struggling Michigan families and communities.

This summer I was able to provide representation for clients who had been denied unemployment benefits, assisting them through the appeals process and representing them at hearings in front of administrative law judges. Managing a caseload of 15+ clients at any given time, I had total ownership of my cases and established a relationship with my clients from the initial intake. While at MiUIP, I interviewed clients and researched and wrote supplemental statements and written arguments, which I submitted on behalf of the client. And at the hearing stage, I also had the opportunity to compose and conduct direct and cross examinations and present closing statements in front of an ALJ.

My work as a law clerk at MiUIP was not only an excellent legal opportunity, but also a highly rewarding experience, allowing me to make connections with clients and truly make a difference in their lives. As someone who was born and raised in Michigan, it was especially rewarding to help other Michigan residents in need at a time when Michigan residents need help most. Several of my clients had worked in Michigan's struggling auto industry prior to being laid off. And often times, what was at stake was a client's livelihood. It was not uncommon to see a client who had lost their house, filed bankruptcy, etc. Although it was nerve-racking to have the responsibility of representing someone when so much was on the line, that made a positive outcome that much more exciting and a client's gratitude that much more satisfying.

Again, thank you. I would not have had this experience if not for Equal Justice America.

Sincerely,  
Nadia Said  
University of Michigan