**Final Internship Report**

**Placement**: The Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples Legal Clinic

2141 Jane Street, Toronto, Ontario

**Intern**: Emily Shepard

This report details my four-month internship as a summer student at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples (CSSP) legal clinic. My placement was both challenging and rewarding, and I am extremely grateful for the IHRP funding that I received. The goal of this report is to detail my duties as a student and explain how my position contributed to the overall work of the clinic.

**Administrative tasks**

I performed a number of administrative tasks to manage my own files and to assist my supervising lawyer. Such duties included sending faxes, opening and closing files, making phone calls and compiling evidence booklets. Completing these tasks helped me to understand the day-to-day needs of a legal office and honed my organizational skills. I also learned the importance of creating precise, complete records of any activity on a file. The clinic always has administrative needs, and my work helped to ease the workload of the clinic staff.

**Research and writing: case files**

Each client presented a separate set of legal issues, and so research was often required to determine the complete details of a client’s legal options. I researched case law, legislation and regulations and summarized my findings in both memos and written submissions. This research helped to direct my supervising lawyer, and provided her with a more in-depth perspective on the state of the law on the relevant issues.

I also wrote numerous letters to government agencies, employers, landlords and tribunals to help resolve clients’ legal issues. Often these letters resulted in a more efficient resolution of the client’s conflict without resorting to an administrative tribunal.

**Research and writing: Justicia**

I met with members of Justicia: Justice for Migrant Workers to discuss their current projects. The goal of these meetings was to offer my support and to act as a liaison between Justicia and CSSP. As a result of these meetings, I attended an information fair in rural Ontario where I spoke with various organizations about the health, immigration and employment issues facing migrant workers in the province. I also wrote a research memo for Justicia on the legal protections against reprisal and/or repatriation for migrant workers who choose to claim their legal rights under a variety of statutes (see attached).

**Client Interaction**

I had a variety of opportunities to interact with clients at the clinic; in many ways, this was the most enriching part of my summer experience. As my supervising lawyer is not a Spanish-speaker, I often translated between her and her clients. This allowed me to observe the types of advice she gave to clients, and was an excellent way to gain a basic knowledge of the types of law practiced at the clinic.

I helped to manage intake at the clinic, and conducted interviews with clients in person and over the phone to help identify their legal issues.

Under the supervision of the director of the clinic, I also helped to represent several clients at administrative tribunals. I prepared and presented submissions at the Board of Referees, and went with several clients to the Landlord Tenant Board. Because of my contributions, the clinic was able to provide advice more clients and address clients’ concerns more quickly.

**Administrative Law and Tribunals**

The clinic assists clients in a number of areas of administrative law, including Employment Standards claims, landlord tenant disputes, and appeals of decisions made by the Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works, and Service Canada. I attended several hearings with my supervising lawyer and watched her present her client’s case at various tribunals. I also received training sessions in these areas of law, and even ran a training session on the Employment Standards Act near the end of my internship. This education was invaluable, as I was not exposed to any of these areas of law during my first year at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. Understanding how the state interacts with low-income individuals gave me insight into the importance of effective legal representation, particularly for clients who are not familiar with English.

My summer at the CSSP legal clinic gave me a unique opportunity to work in a clinic environment and learn about the legal issues faced by Spanish-speaking peoples in Toronto. I gained valuable skills and engaged with legal questions that I would not otherwise have had the chance to explore. My work and language skills were valuable to the clinic, which can experience a very high demand on its services. Without IHRP internship funding I would not have been able to dedicate myself to this position, and so I continue to be very grateful for this opportunity.