

Civil Litigation and Justice Program: Employment Rights Clinic

Solving Employment Problems for Indigent Clients

The Employment Rights Clinic launched in the fall of 2009, as part of the Boston University Civil Litigation Program at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). The Clinic represents indigent clients of GBLS who experience problems with employment, including:

- discrimination on various bases such as race, gender, religion, disability, and age;
- wage theft;
- family medical leave; and
- denials of unemployment benefits.

The Clinic provides free, full representation and legal services to its clients, while teaching students the fundamentals of civil litigation, substantive employment law, and the means by which they can learn to become excellent lawyers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Clinic is a one-semester, six-credit clinic offered during the fall and spring. Students are assigned to work with a clinical professor over the semester, and each student meets with their professor routinely at least once a week to discuss their cases. The term begins with a Bootcamp to prepare for a fast-paced semester.

Each semester, three credits are allocated to fieldwork and three credits to coursework. As part of their fieldwork, students represent Clinic clients in employment cases by preparing for and conducting civil trials and hearings; preparing for and conducting in-depth civil discovery and depositions; appearing in state agencies and district, superior, and federal courts; making summary judgment arguments; and participating in state and federal mediation and negotiations for settlement. Students enrolled in the Clinic in the fall take a Pre-trial Professional Responsibility course, which satisfies

BU Law's professional responsibility requirement. Students enrolled in the spring take a Trial Advocacy course. All coursework introduces students to the fundamentals of civil litigation using a combination of classroom discussions, written assignments, and simulations that are observed and critiqued by clinical faculty and outside attorneys.

We warmly welcome all applicants and remind students that Boston University policy prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status, and acts in conformity with all applicable state and federal laws. This policy extends to academic programs, including School of Law's Clinics and Externships. The Clinic works with students and BU's Office of Disability & Access Services to arrange reasonable accommodations as appropriate.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Clinic students have successfully represented numerous individuals who have suffered wage theft, hostile work environments, predatory sexual harassment, and various forms of discrimination against a range of employers represented by small and large law firms. Settlements of cases have ranged from small payments of a few weeks of wages to payments in excess of \$100,000 based on back or front pay, emotional distress damages, retaliation, or discrimination. Notable examples include:

- a Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination award of \$175,000 in a sexual harassment case;
- a \$144,000 settlement in a wage theft case;
- a \$100,000 settlement in a Family and Medical Leave Act case;
- a \$100,000 settlement in a state gender discrimination case; and
- a \$65,000 settlement in an age discrimination case.