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Over this summer, I got to see how the Attorney General's Office (AGO) works and reflects the needs of the people of Washington State. While interning for the Juvenile Litigation division in Tacoma, Washington, I worked on projects related to racial justice, civil procedure, and summary judgement. The Juvenile Litigation division works on the legal aspect of CPS cases and ensures that children are safe and well cared for while providing parents with essential services and supports to help them adequately protect their children and themselves and work towards reunification. My time at the AGO helped me realize that an individual lawyer's social justice lens, infused with principles of equity and care, helps ensure the organization as a whole is working to uphold all parties' rights equitably.

During the first few weeks of my internship, I learned more about how the State Supreme Court's opinions dictate law in this field. After developing a deeper understanding of key cases, I began updating motions for attorney use and performing research for team leads. Because of how quickly the Court changes case law in this field, it is imperative that the AGO attorneys have motions citing to the most appropriate and recent cases. Additionally, I got to attend trials and hearings in person since court began to move back to a hybrid format. Although these were emotional, especially given the case facts and the parents' hopes for progress, the fact that the AGO was helping to facilitate growth and reunification for families grounded me and helped me to appreciate the division's overarching mission more deeply.

My excellent intern supervisors defined my time at the AGO and made sure I had research projects keeping me busy and were careful to inform me of any interesting upcoming hearings, trials, and seminars. Thanks to their expertise, I got to write about issues ranging between summary judgement, the notice provisions of a new statute, and the recent State Supreme Court updates on the Indian Child Welfare Act. These research projects showed me the nuances and considerations that go into a successful and equitable child welfare case, where the goal is to involve the parents as much as possible and set the family up for success. I experienced this firsthand in hearings and trials, where I watched them advocate for child safety and success during the reunification process. Additionally, I learned about trial strategy, evidence rules, and legal writing in AGO-presented CLEs open to all workers. My intern supervisors ensured I never had a dull moment and filled every day with learning.

During the end of my internship, one of my supervisors assigned me a motion and memorandum for summary judgement that she would send to the Office of Administrative Hearings. During this process, we worked closely to make sure the writing and arguments would represent our client's interests accurately and fairly while maintaining our strong legal position. Although I only had a week of time to complete this project, I learned about the importance of following court deadlines while maintaining impeccable work product. This was a fitting end to the internship, and I proved to myself and my supervising attorneys that I could do this work. Although when I started law school this field was not on my radar, it is deeply meaningful to me and I hope to return to the AGO next summer.