



August 8, 2017

Derek Peterson is a 3L at the University Of Washington School Of Law and spent the summer of 2017 working in NJP's Seattle office where he assisted with housing and consumer cases. "I am grateful for the opportunity to do this work, particularly at this time when so many families are struggling to find affordable housing and avoid homelessness," said Derek.

Derek built on research done during the 2016 Fellowship to support NJP's efforts to address systemic source-of-income-discrimination practices. Currently, there is no law in Washington that prohibits landlords from discriminating against prospective tenants simply because they qualify for rental assistance. As a result, many tenants with lawful sources of income struggle to find safe, stable housing.



The Fredrickson Fellowship provided direct experience of the difference Derek can make as a lawyer. "It felt great to provide support for cases that made a tangible difference to improve the life of another person. These are the moments when I am proudest to be entering the legal profession," Derek says. He is also grateful for the Fellowship stipend. "Paid public interest internships are rare, but they provide students with limited income opportunities that align with their professional aspirations and values."

Derek is a proud native of Aberdeen, Washington, which is consistently considered one of the most impoverished communities in the state. Derek says, "I was fortunate to have teachers and mentors who gave me opportunities and inspired me to trust in my own potential."

Prior to his arrival at UW Law, Derek worked for two years as a legal assistant at NJP's Aberdeen office. This experience confirmed his childhood goal of becoming a lawyer and pursuing a public interest career. "My prior work at NJP made the honor of serving as the Fredrickson Fellow that much richer. It felt like I had come home," said Derek.

After graduating next spring, Derek intends to return to Aberdeen and help effect change through law. "I want to give back to the community and help make a difference. The community has given me so much, and I hope to help others have opportunities like I did."