Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia  
Washington, DC

Mission Statement:  
The mission of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia is to provide and promote quality legal representation to indigent adults and children facing a loss of liberty in the District of Columbia and thereby protect society’s interest in the fair administration of justice. The Criminal Law Internship Program is designed to provide undergraduate, graduate, and law students with the fundamental investigative techniques and relevant criminal law knowledge needed to assist attorneys within the organization in preparation for legal representation of our clients.

Internship Title:  
Intern Investigator

Responsibilities/Projects:  
The Criminal Law Internship Program (CLIP) at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) provides undergraduate and graduate students with the fundamental investigative techniques and the relevant criminal law knowledge needed to assist staff attorneys. The greatest aspect of this internship is the enormous amount of responsibility given to each student, as well as the hands-on nature of the workload. The internship kicks-off with a comprehensive, mandatory weeklong training session that orients interns to PDS and the City. In the second week, Intern Investigators are assigned to attorneys in one of our legal services divisions for whom they are to complete all investigative aspects of the assigned cases. The staff attorneys represent adults and juveniles facing charges that can range anywhere from drug possession to homicide. The investigative responsibilities include: locating and interviewing witnesses, meeting with and interviewing clients, taking detailed witness statements, performing extensive criminal background checks, serving subpoenas, photographing, diagramming and measuring crime scenes, preparing courtroom exhibits, preparing memoranda regarding investigative activities, assisting with defense theory development, and generally assisting the assigned attorney(s) in and out of court.
Qualifications:
The Intern Investigators selected to participate in the program must be either currently enrolled in an accredited college or university, or have already graduated with a Bachelors degree. Applicants must display strong written and oral communication skills and a strong work ethic. Non-US citizens are eligible to participate as volunteers. The Public Defender Service is strongly committed to the principle of diversity and actively encourages applications from people of varied and diverse backgrounds. It is also necessary for the Intern Investigators to be capable of being unbiased and objective when considering our clients and their cases.

Is there a language requirement? If so, please specify the language and level of proficiency needed.

There is no language requirement; however, fluency in a second language is highly sought in applicants.

Working Conditions:
Investigating at the Public Defender Service is not a 9 to 5 job. The hours are flexible, but can also be demanding at times when the attorney is in trial. Many of the witnesses that need to be interviewed work during the day, making it necessary, on occasion, to go into the field in the evening or on weekends. The office environment at PDS is informal. Staff Investigators dress casually (jeans, tennis shoes) and the Intern Investigators are encouraged to do the same. The Intern Investigators could potentially be required to testify in court, therefore suits or other business attire may be needed. Intern Investigators have a computer lab to write reports and conduct investigative searches on the Internet, however, the majority of the time will be spent away from the office in the field.

On-site Supervisor/Mentor:

Stephen Albers  
Supervising Investigator/Internship Coordinator  
633 Indiana Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
202-824-2322  
www.pdsdc.org  
Internship@pdsdc.org

Additional contact:  
Sophia LaFontant  
Program Assistant  
202.824.2307

Mentorship Plan:
Once the one-week training session is complete, the Intern Investigators will be assigned to attorneys who will act as immediate supervisors. The Supervising Investigator will be available any time at the office or by cell phone to answer investigative questions, discuss problems regarding attorney and/or partners assignments, and to accompany interns into the field. There will also be Intern Investigator
Practice Group (IIPG) meetings each month with the Supervising Investigator and the other Investigators to discuss investigative difficulties and any other specific case-related problems.

The hiring process for the Criminal Law Internship Program generally takes about two weeks, however it can take longer. Once the application is received, the Supervising Investigator will review it, along with the required writing sample, and then call the applicant to schedule an interview. Phone interviews are possible for those who are not in the area. After the interview has taken place, and the applicant satisfactorily meets all qualifications, an acceptance letter will be sent out.

The program is further supplemented with a tour and lecture series that may include but is not limited to the US Attorney's Office, the D.C. Department Corrections, the Medical Examiner's Office, St. Elizabeth’s Mental Hospital and the Metropolitan Police Department. The purpose of the tours and lectures are to expand the scope and understanding of the criminal justice system. Also, student interaction with the staff is highly encouraged as it provides increased comprehension of our role in the system. The backgrounds and motivations of our professional staff are quite varied and impressive. Working directly with them provides students with an opportunity to understand the passion and dedication towards our mission. In addition, discounted services are available with LSAT test preparatory centers in the area for those seeking admission to law school.

**Does the intern need to provide her own transportation?**

Intern Investigators spend significant time traveling within DC and surrounding areas, visiting witnesses, crime scenes, and collecting documents. It is beneficial to have full-time access to a vehicle, but it is not required. All work related travel expenses and most parking expenses incurred while on the job are reimbursed.