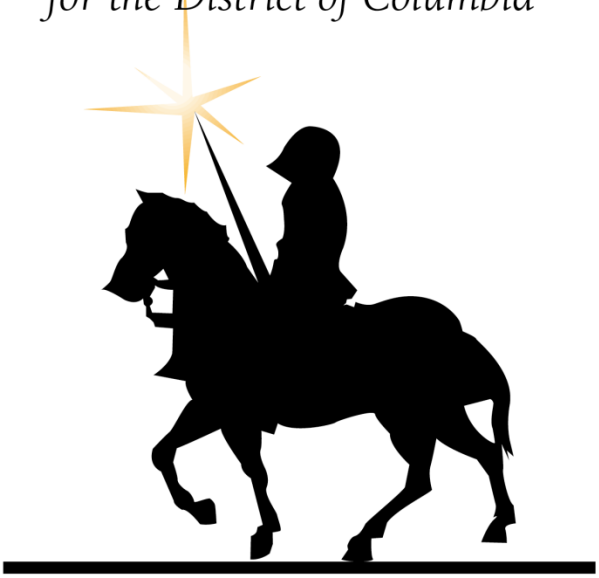
CRIMINAL LAW INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE

for the District of Columbia



CHAMPIONS OF LIBERTY

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN
2026-2027

Dear Prospective Interns:

Thank you for your interest in the Criminal Law Internship Program (CLIP) at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS). The following pages will provide you with in-depth information for the position of Investigative Intern. Please review all the information carefully.

The Criminal Law Internship Program is one of the preeminent legal internship opportunities in the United States. It has been described by *The Washington Post* as one of the finest pre-law experiences available, and *The Princeton Review* has consistently ranked the program as one of the most hands-on internship programs in the nation, stating that the program is "a criminal law internship at its in-your-face best." Former participants of the program, produced in its 35-year history, are now among the most prestigious members of the legal community.

We offer a unique learning experience that can both prepare you for graduate-level work and provide you with the experience necessary for employment in any field.

We hope that you will find the attached materials informative, but please do not hesitate to contact the Internship Office if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to receiving your application online.

Sincerely,

Jasmyne & Nicole

Internship Program Supervisors
Criminal Law Internship Program
Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
internship@pdsdc.org

General Description and Intern Duties

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 Internship kicks-off with an intensive week long training session that orients interns to PDS and the city. In the second week, Investigative Interns are partnered together, assigned to one or more Staff Attorneys and are responsible for supporting investigative aspects of their attorneys' cases. Investigative Interns will be assigned to Staff Attorneys in one of the following divisions: Trial, Special Litigation, Parole, and Civil Legal Services. On some occasions interns may provide support to the Community Defender Division. Regardless of the division, Interns should expect to work zealously for their clients!

The mission of the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDS) is to provide and promote quality legal representation to indigent adults and children facing a loss of liberty in the District of Columbia, thereby protecting society's interest in the fair administration of justice.

Investigative Interns are provided direction and supervision by both the Internship Supervisor and their assigned Staff Attorney(s). Typical investigative tasks include: locating and interviewing witnesses, interviewing clients, taking detailed witness statements, performing extensive criminal background checks, serving subpoenas, testifying, photographing, measuring and diagramming crime scenes, preparing courtroom exhibits, writing reports regarding investigative activities, assisting with case development and generally assisting the assigned attorney(s) in and out of the courtroom. Investigative Interns will be given some clerical duties, but the majority of their work is performed out in the community. It should be noted that there are inherent risks in living and working in an urban area that are different from those of college campuses and smaller towns. Investigative Intern training emphasizes how to remain safe while working at PDS.

PDS represent adults and juveniles facing felony and serious misdemeanor charges, which require thorough investigation to provide our clients with the highest quality legal representation. Although PDS employs Investigative Specialists, Investigative Interns contribute significantly to the investigation, working closely with their assigned Staff Attorney(s) and defense team(s) on a regular basis. As the program progresses, additional meetings and training sessions are scheduled to discuss topics that are relevant to the role of Investigative Interns.

To understand just how crucial investigation is to PDS's clients, it is important to know that each court system across the country has different rules specifying what information the prosecution is required to provide to the defense and when they must provide it. In the District of Columbia, the prosecution need not (and generally does not) give the defense the names and addresses of witnesses or the substance of their statements. Thus, to be prepared for trial, the defense must discover who the witnesses are and interview them to find out what they know in advance of trial. No one has an obligation to speak with the defense, so Investigative Interns must rely upon a combination of charisma, honesty and confidence to obtain interviews.

This is neither a desk job, nor is it an opportunity to just observe an attorney at work. Each Investigative Intern is an important member of a defense team, enabling our clients to assess strengths and weaknesses of the charges brought against them and to provide a coherent defense.

Training: The first week of each internship session is mandatory for training. It is a rigorous training course with presentations by various PDS staff and executives. We ask that no Intern miss any part of the training week, regardless of their schedule.

When shuffling papers at the local law firm just won't do it for you, it's time to seriously consider the Public Defender Service for D.C. The PDS internship is a remarkably hands-on experience, where, in the words of a former intern, "you're out there scrapping, interviewing witnesses, photographing crime scenes, working with attorneys - doing real work for real cases." Add one-of-a-kind field trips, extensive investigative training, and the rush of having the nation's capitol as your training ground, and you've got a criminal law internship at its in your face best.

-The Princeton Review

Hours: On occasion, after training, working hours may extend past normal business hours. Investigative Interns' varied responsibilities require a willingness to work irregular hours. Each Investigative Intern is responsible for the completion of assigned tasks and for planning with their attorney how and when those tasks are to be accomplished. Some Investigative Interns may hold outside part-time jobs, take classes or be involved in organized programs that require attendance at seminars while working for PDS. However, in order to ensure thorough investigation on behalf of our clients and to maximize participants' experiences, a commitment of 40 hours per week is preferable.

Divisions: Interns are generally assigned to either our Trial Division or our Special Litigation Division (SLD). See below for a brief description of these two divisions.

TRIAL:
The Trial Division handles matters in the pre-trial phase, managing cases on an on-going basis. While the lifespan of a case may vary, the Division represents clients from "pick-up" through final resolution (e.g., trial, acquittal, sentencing, probation, or plea agreements). Interns in this division conduct investigative work and assist clients in preparing for preliminary hearings and trial.

SLD:
The Special Litigation Division handles legal matters in the post-trial phase. Its work focuses on historical research and drafting case memos, particularly in cases involving incarceration reduction and compassionate release. Interns in this division work directly with Attorneys and Mitigation Specialists who represent PDS clients in post-conviction matters.

Program Specifics

Investigative Interns must:

- Be available to start on one of our training dates (see end of this bulletin)
- Be a current student at an undergraduate institution or graduate school.
- Be able to make a minimum 12 week commitment.
- Attend the mandatory full week of training; and
- Commit at least 3 full days (part-time requirement) – 5 days (full-time requirement)
    - All Summer Sessions require a Full-Time commitment (5 days/40 hours per week)
    - Intern Schedules are Mon-Fri, with occasional weekend tasks assigned as needed

Funding: Internship Funding may be provided to Interns based on budget availability.

Background: No specific investigative or legal background is required and students from all majors are considered. Applicants must display strong written and oral communication skills, possess a strong work ethic and the ability to adapt in a dynamic environment. Fluency in a second language is also highly sought in applicants. PDS is strongly committed to the principle of diversity and actively encourages applications from people of varied and diverse backgrounds.

PDS is an E-Verify participating agency. Please see the **Right to Work Poster** and the **E-Verify Participation Poster** for more information. Internships are contingent upon confirmation of employment eligibility through E-Verify.

For applicants with disabilities, PDS provides reasonable accommodations which will be decided on a case-by-case basis. To request a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, please contact PDS' Office of Human Resources at hr@pdsdc.org.

Dress Code: Investigative Interns normally work in casual clothes; jeans and sneakers are the norm. Interns should be prepared to dress more formally if they are required to testify in court or interview individuals with whom business attire is appropriate.

Transportation: Investigative Interns 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 incurred while on the job are reimbursed. All personal vehicles used by Investigative Interns in conducting official PDS business must be covered by liability insurance and is the responsibility of the Intern. Interns with



vehicles should also have their own automobile insurance. Proof of insurance is required at the commencement of the program. PDS cannot provide insurance coverage for vehicles or drivers in the program. *Investigative Interns without a vehicle may be reimbursed for on-the-job Metro Rail and Bus fare via SmartTrip Benefits.*

Housing: PDS does not offer Intern housing. However, we are happy to provide incoming Interns with a housing guide offering information on obtaining housing in the DC area. PDS can also connect incoming Interns with one another for shared housing purposes.

Health Insurance: Interns are responsible for having their own health insurance coverage.

Perks

School Credit: Many undergraduate institutions offer credit for participation. Credit hours offered and requirements for receiving credit vary by institution. It is the Intern's responsibility to arrange credit with their institution and supply the Internship Supervisor with any documents/requirements that the Intern needs completed to obtain credit. The Internship Supervisor will complete any paperwork and supply any reviews necessary to the institution.

LSAT Course Discount: Many Investigative Interns take preparatory courses for LSAT or other exams. Testmasters offers PDS Investigative Interns a discount for LSAT prep courses located throughout the United States. **Discount amount may vary based on course selection.*

Court Watching: Investigative Interns observe a variety of pre and post-trial court hearings as part of their listed duties. In addition, there is always a trial and/or hearing PDS is involved in at DC Superior Court. Interns are encouraged to 'court watch' when able.

Tours and Lectures: Each session, CLIP offers tours, lectures and events designed to expose Investigative Interns to many facets of the criminal justice system. In the past, Interns have met informally with prosecutors from the US Attorney's Office, vice squad/homicide detectives and DC Superior Court judges. Tours have included St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the US Capitol, the Supreme Court, Mobile Crime Unit operated by the MPD and tours at the DC Jail and Correctional Treatment Facility.

Training: Investigative Interns receive extensive training in investigation skills including: subpoena service, statement writing, interviewing techniques and an overview of the criminal justice system. These skills are often applicable to and valuable in many professions. However, we want this to be more than just "on-the-job" experience; therefore, we offer various opportunities for personal and professional growth and development as well.

Criminal Law Internship Program
Selection Process and Application Information

The application process for the Criminal Law Internship Program is highly competitive, particularly for the Summer sessions. Applications are reviewed in the order in which they are received; and applications received by the listed deadlines guarantee consideration for that session. Applications received after the listed priority deadlines may be reviewed, but they are not guaranteed such consideration.

Heavy consideration is given to the quality of thought and creativity in the Fact Pattern Written Response requirement of the application. **Note:** The required fact pattern prompt is found in the online application. Once the applications are received and reviewed, interviews will be conducted for those who are being considered. Due to the high volume of applications, not all individuals should expect an interview.

Apply online at www.pdsdc.org. Click on "**Careers**" at the top of the page, and then select "**Student Internship**". On our program page, you can select "Apply to CLIP". Here you will register (create) a profile to submit your application.

Internship Sessions

	Fall Session 2026	**Winter/Spring Session 2027**	**Summer Session 2027**
APPLICATION OPENING	**April 2026**	**August 2026**	**November 2026**
APPLICATION DEADLINE	**June 5, 2026**	**November 7, 2026**	**February 6, 2027**
INTERNSHIP SESSION DATES*	August 17, 2026 - November 4, 2026 *(Full time required)* September 8, 2026- December 4, 2026	January 11, 2027- April 2, 2027 February 8, 2027- April 30, 2027	May 3, 2027- July 23, 2027 May 17, 2027- August 6, 2027 June 1, 2027- August 20, 2027 June 14, 2027- September 3, 2027

Connect with CLIP and PDS

Website: www.pdsdc.org
Twitter: twitter.com/pdsdc
Facebook: facebook.com/pdsdc
Instagram: instagram.com/pdsdc
Email: internship@pdsdc.org