

Student Intern Position Description

Name and Location of Agency:

Federal Public Defender
San Jose Division
55 S. Market St., Suite 820
San Jose, CA 95113

Functions of the Agency:

The role of the Public Defender's Office is to provide quality representation to indigent criminal clients. People who cannot afford to hire a lawyer have the constitutional right to an appointed lawyer, which in most cases is the Public Defender. This office employs 5 trial attorneys, 3 appellate attorneys, and 6 support staff including paralegals and investigators. This office serves Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties.

Intern Duties and Responsibilities:

You will work with investigators, paralegals, and trial attorneys. Areas of law include the defense of charges such as felon in possession of a firearm, drug sales, illegality, and fraud. Duties include discovery organization, writing letters to request records from law enforcement agencies, medical facilities, and other businesses. You will also be asked to obtain records of prior convictions from the various courthouses in the jurisdiction. Record reviewing, taking detailed notes, and writing summaries of those records are typical tasks an intern is asked to do. Interns may also be asked to help obtain background information that can lead to further mitigation investigation. You will be asked to do a lot of online research/investigation. You may be asked to work on transcripts of audio and/or video interviews.

Spanish speaking interns may also be asked to interpret for attorney/client meetings and phone calls in the office. You may also be asked to translate written documents.

Educational Requirements:

The internship is best suited for undergraduate students majoring in Legal Studies/Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Community Studies, or related fields. In addition, students contemplating law school or studying for the LSAT will find this internship extremely valuable.

Skills, Training or Qualifications:

The following qualifications are preferred: the ability to take direction well, have a good attitude, work well with others, have strong organizational skills, speak, read, and write well in English. Curiosity and being a self-learner are highly desired traits. Good communication skills and general maturity are a must. Spanish speakers are highly encouraged to apply.

Interns will participate in training prior to starting, and will receive the job training. They may also have the opportunity to observe court proceedings.

While not required, familiarity with Microsoft Office 365 suite is a plus. The office uses Microsoft for all our work including but not limited to Outlook, Teams, and Word. Familiarity with Adobe Pro is also a plus.

Additional Requirements:

Because travel throughout the jurisdiction is necessary, interns must have a valid driver's license, access to a reliable car with proof of insurance, and must have a cell phone if a personal vehicle is used, reimbursement will be provided at the per-mile rate as recommended by Federal and IRS guidelines.

At least two weeks prior to starting the internship, interns will be required to be finger printed at the Federal Courthouse in San Jose. There is no fee associated with this, but interns cannot begin the internship without this.

Time Commitment:

A minimum of 16 hours per week for at least two consecutive quarters or one semester is required. Hours may be scheduled Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Applicants willing to extend the duration of their internship typically gain a more in-depth experience. Because of the training and work involved, there are two internship sessions per year. The Summer & Fall internship starts in late June and goes through the end of Fall Quarter/Semester. The Winter & Spring internship starts in early January and goes through the end of the Spring Quarter/Semester.

Benefits Available to Intern:

Although this is an unpaid position, interns are offered an opportunity to explore career options, build resumes, network with professionals in their fields of interest and gain hands-on experience in a legal setting. The internship offers students an opportunity to experience real situations within a legal office that complement their academic studies and career goals. This is a unique opportunity to get an insider's perspective on the workings of the local criminal justice system. Further, students have been able to obtain school credit for this internship and are strongly encouraged to do so.

Applying for the internship:

Please submit a cover letter, resume and three references by email to: Nancy_Romero@fd.org. No phone calls please.

Your cover letter is your opportunity to help us understand why you are the best candidate for this position. It provides a chance to elaborate on your background as listed on your resume. It also demonstrates written communication skills and style. It allows for a more in-depth description of career goals, personal interests, academic accomplishments, and community involvement. Share your expectations of the internship experience, including what you'd like to accomplish; what issues/projects/assignments are of particular interest; and what skills, knowledge, or expertise you hope to gain. Be sure to also include the approximate date (or dates) that you can start the internship and the preferred duration.

Applications for Summer and Fall are accepted through the first week in May with selections made by end of May. Applications for Winter and Spring are accepted through October with selections made in November.

Contact:

Federal Public Defender's Office
Attn: Nancy Romero
55 S. Market St., Suite 820
San Francisco, CA 94102-4000