

NEW MEXICO LAW OFFICES OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER INTERNSHIP/ EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Law Offices of the Public Defender (LOPD) offers an internship and externship program that provides students exposure to the practice of criminal law, courtroom litigation, and providing holistic representation to our indigent clients. Interns and externs are afforded the opportunity to work directly with attorneys on felony, misdemeanor and juvenile cases. The internship program is largely based out of the Albuquerque office; however, internship opportunities exist at almost all of the LOPD offices.

Law students are paired with senior attorneys experienced in training new attorneys on court procedures and local practices. Law students are expected to perform more complex technical legal work, prepare documents, correspondence, take statements of witness, and assist the supervising attorney in preparation of the facts and legal references for use in litigation.

Applicants may serve as an intern or volunteer during the fall, spring, or summer semester. The LOPD does not offer paid internships, however the LOPD works closely with various schools throughout the country to accept students who may earn credit during their internship while also gaining a valuable experience that provides students insight into criminal defense. The LOPD also accepts students able to secure specialized funding through fellowships, educational institutions or other organizations.

Ability to advocate directly for clients in court

Law students participating in an internship or externship *may* be able to address the judge and speak on behalf of clients by entering their appearance in court hearings, including bond arraignments, conditions of release and motion hearings, trials, and plea and sentencing hearings. In order for a student to enter an appearance, minimum requirements established in local rules must be met. Law students attending the University of New Mexico School of Law must have received a passing grade in law school courses aggregating thirty (30) or more semester hours, shall be familiar with the Rules of Professional Conduct, and obtain a certificate from their dean which specifies the time frame the student will be participating in the internship. All students interested must review NMRA Rule 5-110 and Rule 1-094.

All law students attending any other American Bar Association accredited law school must have received a passing grade in law school courses aggregating thirty (30) or more semester hours, shall be familiar with the Rules of Professional Conduct, and obtain a certificate from their dean which specifies the time frame the student will be participating in the internship. All students interested must review NMRA Rule 5-110.1 and Rule 1-094.1.

“During my internship, I was able to appear on record in bond arraignments, pre-trial conferences, motion hearings, and a trial that I first-chaired. I conducted pretrial interviews. I wrote motions and memoranda on issues touching all aspects of criminal procedure. But what was most impactful for me was the opportunity to meet, speak, and build working relationships with clients throughout their cases. I’ve previously had criminal defense internships in New Orleans, Louisiana and London, United Kingdom, but never had I been entrusted with such a direct and active level of involvement in clients’ cases. I want to become a public defender to protect the rights of the most vulnerable, remove burden from defendants’ shoulders, and have the accused feel that someone is fighting for them. LOPD guided me on how to be an effective advocate to accomplish exactly that.” *Carlene Miller, Norte Dame School of Law 2017 Graduate*

Instructions for Applying for internship, externship or volunteer work with the LOPD:

Application Deadlines:

Fall, Spring and Summer Internships/Externships

We accept applications for the fall, spring and summer semesters on a rolling basis. We recommend submitting applications based on the following deadlines:

- Applications for fall internships by June 30.
- Applications for spring internships by September 30.
- We begin accepting summer applications starting September 30 with a final deadline of February 28.

Timeline for Interview Process:

In person or telephonic interviews will be scheduled:

- September and October for spring and summer internships.
- February and March for summer and fall internships.
- Interviews may also be scheduled upon receipt of application.

Application Materials:

Any students seeking an internship must submit a full application by emailing it to LOPD-internship@lopdm.us. The following must be attached: 1) a current resume, 2) a cover letter, and 3) current transcripts. Please include in the subject line your class year (undergraduate, 1L, or 2L) and the time period that you are applying. (Example: 2L fall or 1L summer).

Please include the following information in the body of the email:

- If you are open to different semesters, and if you have a preference for specific semester placement, please include that information and an explanation.
- If you are interested in an internship for credit, or if you are receiving a fellowship and/or a stipend.
- If there is a deadline (for example, school or fellowship deadlines) that you need to know whether you will be offered an internship by a specific date.
- If you are fluent in any languages other than English.
- We encourage all applicants to consider interning at one of our offices outside of Albuquerque. If you are interested, please include which offices are of interest in your email.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Law Offices of the Public Defender is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis on race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, age, spousal affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, political affiliation or religion, mental or physical disability, or serious medical condition.