

CRIMINAL LAW IN PRACTICE (CLIP) AND THE LAW OFFICES OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Criminal Law in Practice (CLIP) program offered through the University of New Mexico School of Law gives students the opportunity to represent clients and participate in real cases. Students will handle a variety of cases during the semester and learn valuable skills while conducting factual investigations, negotiation, hearings, trial preparation and participating in trials. CLIP is designed to introduce students to the litigation of criminal cases in New Mexico courts. The program has two parts, a classroom component wherein students attend discussions concerning each step of a criminal case and where they practice different aspects of defense work. Secondly, students are paired with an experience LOPD trial attorney. Under the supervision of an experienced attorney, students have the opportunity to work with the defense team on every aspect of a criminal case.

Many CLIP students go on to have a career with LOPD! LOPD starts making offers to May graduates as early as the August prior to graduation with most offers extended by the end of December. Students interested in a career with LOPD should take CLIP no later than their first semester of their 3L year. While participation in CLIP is not a requirement for employment with LOPD, those who have participated in CLIP tend to perform better on legal hypotheticals during the interview process. CLIP participation also demonstrates a commitment to indigent defense and gives LOPD a firsthand view of the quality of a candidate's legal research and writing, advocacy skills, ability to communicate and empathize with clients, professionalism and work ethic.