

SAMPLE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT – DA/PD OFFICE

**LEGAL CLERKSHIP PROGRAM (SPRING, SUMMER & FALL)
PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICE FOR THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

www.pdsdc.org/InternshipsAndClerkships/Clerkships.aspx

Jennifer K. Thomas,
Esq.
Legal Recruiting
Manager
Public Defender
Service for the
District of Columbia
633 Indiana Avenue,
NW
Washington, DC
20004
202-824-2337

Submit Electronically ONLY:

https://lawcruit.micronapps.com/lc_supp_app_frm.aspx?lawfirm=168&id=0

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM:

The Office seeks 20-30 **1Ls and 2Ls** (2Ls preferred) for volunteer and a possibly a limited number of paid Summer 2012 Legal Clerkships, and **2Ls and 3Ls** for part-time (15 hrs/wk) Fall and Spring clerkships. The Summer program runs 11 weeks, with a full week of training. Clerks respond to inmate letters requesting legal assistance; interview incarcerated and institutionalized clients; perform field investigations; conduct legal research and writing; attend discovery conferences; perform case preparation duties; represent juveniles in disciplinary hearings; and attend trials, parole hearings, and appellate arguments. Clerks usually work with a single attorney in Trial, Appellate, Mental Health, Special Litigation, or Parole Divisions. Positions are also available in the Civil Legal Services Unit, Community Defender Program, and Juvenile Services Program.

PDS, a federally funded, independent agency governed by an 11-member Board of Trustees, has approximately 235 employees, including 125 attorneys. It provides legal representation to indigent adults and children.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

Demonstrated interest in indigent defense and/or poverty law is required. A public interest background is helpful, as is Spanish fluency and sign language proficiency.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The application packet, consisting of cover letter, resume, brief legal writing sample, law school transcript or grade sheet, and 3 references, must be submitted as one pdf file along with the application (see website). Applications are accepted and reviewed on a **Rolling Basis**. Interviews are conducted in person or telephonically. Offers are extended on a rolling basis, but generally within 2-4 weeks of interview.

*The following cover letter is an example of how you might respond to this job posting.

IMA JAE D. STUDENT

4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW · Washington, DC 40056 · (202) 555-0000 · austudent@wcl.american.edu

Comment [WCL1]: Can use either your resume heading or format it like a traditional letter.

December 1, 2011

Ms. Jennifer K. Thomas, Esq.
Legal Recruiting Manager
Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia
633 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Comment [WCL2]: I like a very formal posture right from the start, but you wouldn't necessarily have to use Ms./Mr. here.

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Comment [WCL3]: This is a formal letter - make sure you use a colon here. And, if you don't have a name, make up a title. I.e. here it would be Dear Legal Recruiting Manager. Never address it "To Whom It May Concern."

I am a second year law student at American University Washington College of Law and am writing to apply for a summer Legal Clerkship at the Public Defender Service. After serving as a judicial intern for the Honorable Gregory Jackson at the DC Superior Court this past summer, I knew that I wanted to be a part of the dynamic work that your office does. I am a native DC resident who wishes to begin my legal career in serving the needs of underrepresented criminal defendants at a place that works industriously and collaboratively to protect the rights of people.

Comment [WCL4]: You want to start with who you are and what you're applying for.

Comment [WCL5]: Why that employer specifically.

Comment [WCL6]: From the area - demonstrates strong ties and probably a commitment to staying in the area for a long time.

Comment [WCL7]: What is your hook for that employer?

In working for Judge Jackson, I experienced the complexities of the courtroom. I spent time observing the courtroom, and I was assigned projects that included writing several bench memoranda and assisting the Judge with the drafting of his opinions. In addition, I believe that my detail-oriented nature, further developed as a junior staffer for the *American University International Law Review* and my experience of working in a variety of professional settings, makes me particularly adaptable to the task of engaging with various statutory regimes and case law. I have managed heavy caseloads, drafted legal memoranda, and researched case law under strict deadlines.

Comment [WCL8]: This is the practical skills paragraph. Research, writing, analytical skills and/or skills specific to the position and what is your evidence that you possess these skills. You will not list every experience on your resume. You want to show the employer how the experience is relevant and that you can synthesize your experience into a few key points. Don't forget academic (see ILR) and/or volunteer experiences.

My desire to work for the public good drives me to seek out opportunities to help those less fortunate. I have long volunteered in my community. While in college, I participated in numerous spring break trips to Ecuador where I assisted individuals in seeking redress for wrongs in the criminal and civil systems. My fluency in Spanish allowed me to take on increasing responsibility, and even assist attorneys in initial client intakes. While in law school, I have continued to seek opportunities to volunteer. I participated in the Alternate Winter Break trip to New Orleans, where I was assigned to a felony attorney at the Orleans Public Defender's Office. I have also pursued my passion in the classroom by taking the general criminal procedural classes as well as Poverty Law, Advanced Issues in Criminal Law, Criminal Trial Advocacy, and the Death Penalty seminar.

Comment [WCL9]: This is the "passion/interest" paragraph. Why do you want to serve this population, work on these issues, be a part of this employer's mission?

Comment [WCL10]: The employer is looking for a track record of public service.

Comment [WCL11]: The posting specifically calls for Spanish language skills.

Comment [WCL12]: The employer is looking for a track record of public service.

Comment [WCL13]: Relevant courses are very helpful in the public sector.

Comment [WCL14]: I have enclosed the documents you've asked for (ie. I can follow directions).

I want to be an assistant public defender when I graduate, and I want to learn from the best. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the possibility of working at the Public Defender Service. I have enclosed my resume, writing sample, references, and unofficial transcript. I can be reached at austudent@wcl.american.edu or 202-555-0000. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

Ima Jae D. Student

Enclosures (4)