

# Office of the Ohio Public Defender

## Summary of Agency

The Office of the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) is the state agency responsible for providing legal representation and other services to those accused of a crime who cannot afford to hire their own attorney. The United States Constitution and the Ohio Constitution guarantee the right to an attorney, because an attorney is needed to protect an individual's rights and to present the evidence necessary for a fair and reliable determination of guilt or innocence. The Office of the Ohio Public Defender is critical to the fairness of the criminal justice system: the quality of justice the person receives should not be determined by the person's financial status.

Ohio's public defender system was created in 1976 by Chapter 120 of the Ohio Revised Code. Timothy Young is the Director of the Office of the Ohio Public Defender, which is overseen by the nine-member Ohio Public Defender Commission. The Office is divided into Death Penalty, Legal, Juvenile, and Administrative divisions, as well as the Trumbull County Branch Office and the Multi-County Program.

The focus of the Office of the Ohio Public Defender is on the appeals and post-trial activities of death penalty and other criminal and juvenile delinquency cases. The Office also offers representation at trial when requested by the courts, as well as at parole and probation revocation hearings for the more than 50,000 people in Ohio's prisons. Other services include technical assistance, research services, educational programs, investigation and mitigation services, and assistance to court-appointed attorneys throughout the state.

The OPD website and additional information on this agency can be found here:

<http://www.opd.ohio.gov/>

## Intern Responsibilities – Expert Work Group Intern

The OPD has several divisions which provide opportunities for internships with the Criminal Justice Research Center. The Expert Work Group Intern would work directly with Carrie Wood, Assistance State Public Defender and the multiple other attorneys and investigators in the expert working group. The primary task of this group is compiling a functional database of experts for use by the Ohio Public Defender staff. The intern will assist the group in maintaining the database, gathering information about the experts – including speaking with experts and their staff – doing research on specific fields of expertise and what accreditation labs or individuals should have to work in a particular field. Additional research in the ways expert testimony impact various components of legal cases and legal topics will be required. Some of the Areas

of expertise being reviewed by the group for case impact and database development include DNA, forensic sciences topics, neuro-psychologists, etc.. This is an unpaid placement.

### Qualifications

The OPD prefers that interns have excellent research and writing skills. Likewise, they prefer that interns have a strong desire to work with their client populations and are self-directed and take appropriate initiative in the workplace. Since travel is sometime required, flexibility with scheduling and the ability to extend hours into the evening may be needed. Interns, like investigators who are agents of the attorneys, are bound by Client-Attorney Confidentiality with regards to all case related material and information. A Confidentiality Agreement must be signed by all interns and case specific details cannot be discussed with non-OPD staff. Most positions at OPD require at least a 10 hours per week commitment for at least one full semester.

### Location/Hours

Internship hours will be arranged between the student and the placement supervisor. This will depend upon the division in which the intern is assigned and the nature of the duties. The Office of the Ohio Public Defender is located at:

Office of the Ohio Public Defender  
250 East Broad Street - Suite 1400  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 466-5394  
(800) 686-1573

The primary contact person at the OPD is:

Elisa Lenssen, Human Resources Specialist

[Elisa.Lensson@OPD.Ohio.gov](mailto:Elisa.Lensson@OPD.Ohio.gov)

### Application

**For further information on this opportunity, please contact the CJRC Program Manager – Christopher Yanai. To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to: Christopher Yanai, Program Manager (614) 688-8685, Email: [Yanai.7@osu.edu](mailto:Yanai.7@osu.edu)**

**Note: This is an unpaid internship. Academic credit for Research or Internship is available. Applications will begin to be screened on 8/1/2015.**

