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 – “Kids in Adult Prison Project” Two Openings

The Office of the Ohio Public Defender’s Kids in Adult Prison Working Group seeks an undergraduate student to assist with a data collection project at its Columbus office. Duties may vary but primarily will include investigating and gathering necessary information about children in Ohio whose cases were transferred from juvenile to criminal court and who were prosecuted as an adult between 2000 and 2014. The task will include using information that is available, including the name, date of birth, and committing county, to search for information about their case, scanning necessary documents, and including the information gathered in a database; search techniques may include searching various websites, requesting and reviewing court records, reviewing on-line court dockets and entries, and may include contact with potential clients and/or their families for additional information. This information will be used to assist
the work group by locating potential clients who committed their offense prior to turning 18 years-old but are now serving lengthy prison sentences for potential litigation and/or legislative advocacy.

**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. The ideal candidate will be a student with a good academic record, strong organizational skills, good oral communication skills, and a demonstrated interest in working with low-income or indigent individuals.

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. This is an unpaid placement.

**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

**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

**Note:** This is an unpaid internship. Academic credit for Research or Internship is available.