

The Federal Community Defender for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia)

Appeals Unit Externship Information

The Office of the Federal Community Defender for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is pleased to accept applications for our Fall 2021 Appeals Unit Externship. The Federal Community Defender represents indigent defendants charged with federal crimes. This externship will provide law students with a close-up and hands-on view of the federal appellate process from initial record review through certiorari proceedings in the Supreme Court. The student will assist Appeals Unit attorneys by researching legal issues, drafting research memoranda and/or sections of appellate briefs, and participating in moot courts in preparation for oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The student may also work on certiorari petitions. As time permits, the student is welcome to attend trial proceedings and appellate oral arguments that he/she is not directly involved with. If desired, the student may work on a project to yield a writing sample.

This is a 7-credit externship, and students are expected to devote 21 hours per week for the semester, which runs through the end of the Examination Period. Students will be assigned a Faculty Supervisor whom they will meet with on a bi-weekly basis, along with submitting reflective journals. This externship is open to current 2L or 3L students, with preference to those having completed criminal procedure coursework.

HOW TO APPLY: Before 5 PM on May 10, 2021, students must apply for this externship by emailing a resume and one-page Statement of Interest to externships@law.upenn.edu with “Federal Defender – Appeals Unit Application” in the subject line. Please combine your resume and Statement of Interest into one pdf. The Statement of Interest should address why you want to enroll in this externship. The Penn Law Externship Program will forward students’ application materials to the Federal Defender’s Office on your behalf. The Defender’s Office will contact students it would like to interview directly and will select the student to enroll in the externship.

Before Advance Course Registration closes, students will receive an email letting them know if they were or were not selected for enrollment. Please note that this placement expends a great deal of time and effort scheduling work, securing supervisors, designing programming, creating office space, etc. Thus, students are strongly encouraged to enroll only if they are committed to completing the externship. If you have any questions about this externship, please email externships@law.upenn.edu.