

Internship Testimonials

"A Sense of Responsibility"

"It has been an amazing experience at VIDC. Unlike my previous internship, I feel I get knowledge of what it takes to be a sentencing advocate. I'm able to conduct interviews with clients, go to court proceedings and write a sentencing memorandum with my supervisors overseeing instead of watching them do the work. My supervisors give me a sense of responsibility on cases which will be helpful when I look for a job upon graduation."

"I will take away knowledge of a career choice and real world application of my degree. This experience has provided me with knowledge of the criminal justice system that I would not learn within a book like interview techniques for clients or experience preparing and writing a sentencing memorandum. This experience will aid me when it's time for me to enter the professional world as more than an intern."

- Kori Bonner, Fairfax Public Defender Office Intern

"The Behind the Scenes View"

"My internship experience here has provided me with valuable exposure to the day-to-day workings of a public defender's office. Specifically, in shadowing attorneys at court, I have seen how they interact with their clients, witnesses, prosecutors, family members of clients, and court personnel. Watching what happens at court before a case is called and after the parties have left the courtroom, the "behind-the-scenes" view, is much more valuable than simply sitting and hearing what transpires before a judge. The internship has further allowed me to hone my legal research and writing skills by fulfilling writing assignments given to me by attorneys. I have also been able to develop my client interviewing and courtroom skills as I have recently begun to handle juvenile detention hearings. Finally, simply chatting with the attorneys in the office gives me insight into what a career as a public defender would be like."

- Shina Collins, Portsmouth Public Defender Office Intern

"Desire to become a Public Defender"

"Being an intern at the Northern Virginia Capital Defender Office has affirmed my desire to become a public defender after I graduate from law school. My assignments are always changing. One day I may be reviewing documents, audio tapes, or photographs that we have received; another day I may be researching a point of criminal law, criminal procedure, or evidence; and still another day I may be observing the case that I have been working on in court."

"I particularly enjoy the research assignments. They allow me to build on the general principles I have learned in my classes, then research to find out how Virginia--and sometimes other jurisdictions, like the 4th Circuit--have interpreted and applied those principles. It's great to find out that I really find this work interesting and engaging, because it's what I want to spend my career doing! I also know that this is the research that the attorneys in the office would be doing if it were not assigned to me. I enjoy the responsibility, and I feel proud to help the office in whatever way that I can. I also feel confident that this internship is developing the critical thinking and research skills that I will use in my career after graduation."

- Megan Johnson, Northern Virginia Capital Defender Office Intern