

## 2023 Internship Testimonials

“I interned with the Pulaski office of the Public Defender as part of the STAR (small--Town And Rural) Internship program the summer after my 1L year in 2022. As it was my first job in the legal field I had no idea what to expect. Although I felt like I was trying to drink from a firehose in my first week, I was quickly able to find ways to help the team through research projects, motions drafting, and eventually client intake and interviewing. There is simply too much work and not enough people in offices like Pulaski, so the opportunities are there for students like me who are brand new to legal work to make a difference. On the other hand, my mentors never asked me to do something I was unqualified to do and always took the time to explain things to me a second (or third) time.”

“The Chief Public Defender, Lindsay Phipps, her deputies, and assistants were all incredibly patient with me as they showed me the ropes and indulged my very basic questions and curiosities about the criminal legal system. Ultimately, the example set by the extremely capable attorneys in the Pulaski office convinced me that my future is in public defense.”

### **Frank Morris, Pulaski Public Defender Office Intern (STAR Program)**

“The public defenders I worked with had great insight on the field. I am really big on trying to figure out how to find my identity in the working environment, especially considering I was so young and my supervisors were really helpful in giving me that insight. Knowledge is half the battle in public defense, the rest is communication and the way you physically carry yourself in these situations and I learned a lot from that.”

### **Avery Duechle, Roanoke Public Defender Office**

“I had wonderful experiences as a VIDC intern - summer internships were well structured and clearly geared toward professional growth, supervising attorneys took their roles seriously to provide meaningful work and feedback, and interns were given multiple opportunities to meet with clients, research, and write! I can't wait to return to VIDC after graduation.”

### **Abigail Lovell, Fairfax County Public Defender Office**

“The Portsmouth PD's office is an excellent example of a well-run office. The leaders work alongside the rest of us and truly value each employee as a person. Having a healthy work-life balance permeates through all ranks and all of the employees have a good relationship with one another.”

### **Alyssa Kreps, Portsmouth Public Defender Office**