



State Appellate Defender Office

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SADO Direct Appeals Summer Internship Program

The Michigan State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) seeks first- and second-year law students committed to public service, racial equity, and social justice to join our Direct Appeals Summer Internship Program. SADO provides representation to poor people who appeal their state criminal convictions.

What is SADO?

SADO is a place where change happens and where we give voice to our clients. We work with each client to address their particular needs. We also work to improve the system as a whole. For the 2023-24 Michigan Supreme Court term, SADO attorneys have twelve cases awaiting argument and decision. These cases can have a massive impact. For example, in the 2022-23 term, among many SADO wins at the Michigan Supreme Court, were the Court's decisions that ensured that every sentence in Michigan is reviewed for reasonableness and that police officers lying to teenagers in an interrogation are relevant factors to determine if a statement is voluntary.¹ One summer intern from 2023 described why SADO was a great place to work: "SADO is a supportive and tight-knit community. It is collegial and an intellectually stimulating environment."

What do SADO interns do?

Interns are paired with a staff attorney and will work with other SADO team members including investigators, social workers, reentry specialists, and support staff. SADO summer interns will gain experience with client counseling, fact investigation, mitigation, legal research, brief writing, and oral advocacy (if possible). Because Michigan has a unique criminal appellate process which allows for factual development on direct appeal, interns can expect to work in both trial and appellate courts, and to attend trial court hearings and Court of Appeals arguments.

The summer internship program includes weekly sessions on a variety of topics, including Well-Being, the Michigan Department of Corrections (where we hear from impacted people), the Fourth Amendment, and Litigating Race on Appeal.

¹ See SADO Assistant Defender Adrienne Young argue for Dametrius Posey [here](#). See SADO Deputy Director Marilena David argue for Joshua Stewart [here](#).

Where do SADO interns work?

The internship is hybrid. SADO has space in both the Lansing and Detroit offices for interns to work in-person. In-person days are flexible and can be determined with your supervisor. Interns are encouraged to come into the office to form relationships with each other and the rest of the SADO team. There will also be client visits and court attendance throughout Michigan.

When does the program begin and end?

The program will run from late May through August 2024; precise dates are flexible. Due to limited resources, our internship opportunities are currently unpaid. We encourage applicants to seek funding from their academic institutions or third-party funders, and we will share opportunities for financial assistance as we learn of them.

How do I apply?

If you are interested in applying, please e-mail a resume and cover letter together in a single PDF file to internships@sado.org. Please have your subject line read “Direct Appeals Summer Internship Application.” Your cover letter should indicate why you want to be part of the SADO team and work for our clients. **Applications should be submitted by January 12, 2024, at 5 PM.** Decisions will be made on a rolling basis.

Questions?

Email internships@sado.org.

***SADO is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion.** We recognize people of color are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system and actively seek to employ staff with backgrounds representative of our clients. We strongly encourage people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ people, and people directly affected by the criminal legal system to apply. A felony conviction does not prohibit employment at SADO.*