



State Appellate Defender Office

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**State Appellate Defender Office – Juvenile Lifer Unit – Mitigation Internship Program
Accepting applications on a rolling basis**

Project Summary: SADO is an appellate public defender office working statewide to address injustices and disparities in the criminal legal system. We are driven by our values: Freedom, Inclusivity, Empathy, Respect, Community, and Excellence. The JLU represents clients who were sentenced to life in prison for crimes committed as teenagers and are now entitled to resentencing hearings following U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the cases of *Montgomery v Louisiana*, and *Miller v Alabama*. Per this year’s Michigan Supreme Court decisions in *Parks*, *Poole*, and *Stovall*, SADO attorneys successfully expanded these resentencing hearings to people serving life without parole for crimes committed at age 18 and people serving life with parole sentences for offenses committed as youth. SADO’s Juvenile Lifer Unit is seeking legal and mitigation interns to assist with client intake, record collection, record review and analysis, and initial legal advocacy for individuals who are newly eligible for resentencing hearings.

The ideal internship candidate has:

- A demonstrated interest in social justice and anti-oppression work
- Cultural humility and a commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of incarcerated clients convicted of felonies
- An interest in exploring public defense, public interest law, mitigation investigation, and/or sentencing advocacy as a future career
- Attention to detail, research and writing skills, critical thinking, curiosity, communication skills, empathy, and the ability to handle sensitive and highly confidential information

Intern responsibilities may include:

- Obtain mitigation records from places like schools, prisons, medical facilities, and other agencies
- Analyze and review mitigation records and synthesize information into spreadsheets, timelines, and visual aids
- Draft summaries of mitigation evidence and relevant research areas such as childhood trauma and brain science
- Assist with intake of clients eligible for resentencing

Additional information

- This internship is open to undergraduate and graduate-level interns from a range of disciplines such as social work, anthropology, psychology, creative writing, criminal justice, and sociology
- Interns may be based in our Detroit or Lansing offices. Internship duties may include regional travel to conduct interviews with witnesses, visit prisons or jails, and attend court

hearings. Interns should have access to reliable transportation to the Detroit or Lansing office. Interns must have their own laptop.

- At this time, the internship is not paid. Interns are encouraged to seek academic course credit or external funding from their university or a partner organization. Supervisors will provide supporting documentation necessary to secure external funding or academic credit.
- MSW Interns hoping to complete their Field Placement with SADO's Juvenile Lifer Unit are encouraged to apply. At this time, SADO cannot offer in-house LMSW clinical supervision for MSW interns, but your university may offer LMSW supervision via their field office.
- Interns must dedicate at least 16 hours per week to the internship (part-time, typically two days per week). We also welcome full-time interns to join our program during the summer.

Please submit a resume and cover letter (in a single PDF) explaining your interest in working on youth resentencing hearings. Please explain your relevant personal, professional, and/or academic experiences and how those experiences led you to apply for this internship. Send your resume and cover letter (in one PDF with your full name in the filename) to: Chelsea Richardson, Mitigation Specialist Supervisor, at crichardson@sado.org with the subject line 'JLU Mitigation Intern.'

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 hire staff and interns with backgrounds representative of our clients and the defense community. We strongly encourage people of color, first generation college students and professionals, people with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ people, and people directly affected by the criminal legal system to apply. A felony conviction does not prohibit employment or interning at SADO.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Internship spots are limited, so you are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.