



State Appellate Defender Office

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SADO Direct Appeals 2025 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. SADO attorneys are frequently in the Michigan Supreme Court and impacting law statewide. For example, the Court recently decided that every sentence in Michigan must be reviewed for reasonableness and, in another case, held that a police officer lying during an interrogation is a factor to consider when determining if a statement made during the interrogation was voluntary.¹ One summer intern 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 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 wellbeing, the Michigan Department of Corrections, the Fourth Amendment, and litigating race on appeal.

¹ See former 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. 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 2025; 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 10, 2025, 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.