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2027 Summer Internship Postings

The Michigan State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) seeks first- and second- year law students committed to public defense, racial equity, and social justice to join our Direct Appeals Unit, Juvenile Lifer Unit (JLU), Criminal Defense Resource Center (CDRC), or Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System (MAACS) internship programs.

SADO's Direct Appeals unit provides representation to those appealing their felony convictions. Interns work closely with a public defender as they represent clients on appeal in the trial courts, Michigan Court of Appeals, and Supreme Court. Working under the supervision of assistant defenders, interns will gain experience with file review, client visitations, legal research, brief writing, and more.

SADO's Juvenile Lifer Unit provides representation to those sentenced to life without parole for crimes committed as children. Interns will work with members of the Juvenile Lifer Unit, including attorneys, investigators, mitigation specialists, reentry specialists and support staff. JLU interns will gain experience with file and transcript review, client visitations, mitigation, legal research, and brief writing- all in preparation for resentencing which will consider the person's youth via the factors outlined in *Miller v Alabama* (2012).

SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center (CDRC) provides a variety of client-centered education to Michigan's criminal defense bar, as well as resources to advocates and impacted individuals. Interns with the CDRC will play a direct role in this mission, dedicating 50% of their time to conducting legal research and drafting essential resources for trial and appellate attorneys and individuals who are incarcerated. For the remainder of their time, interns will work closely alongside a CDRC Research & Training Attorney representing clients throughout the appellate process. Working under the supervision of an attorney, interns will gain experience with file review, client visitations, legal research, brief writing, and more.

SADO's Youth Defense Team & CDRC are jointly seeking one dedicated intern for a youth defense position split between systemic research and direct advocacy. Youth defense work focuses on protecting the rights of children in the youth legal system, while advocating for rehabilitative outcomes rather than adult-style punishments. The Youth Defense Intern will be working under the supervision of CDRC's Youth Defense Research and Training Attorney, conducting legal research and drafting training materials for Michigan's trial-level youth defenders. Half of the intern's time will also be spent working under the supervision of a youth

defender representing child clients throughout the appellate process, gaining experience with file review, client visitations, legal research, brief writing, and more.

Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System (MAACS), the Private Counsel Division of SADO, is responsible for the recruitment, training, and oversight of private attorneys who accept court appointed appeals from the state's circuit courts. MAACS roster attorneys handle thousands of appellate assignments across the state each year, including direct appeals, motions for relief from judgment, and juvenile lifer resentencings. Working under the supervision of MAACS Roster Support and Performance Manager, students will work with MAACS roster attorneys on all aspects of appellate representation. Work will include transcript and discovery review, client counseling and investigation of client concerns, document collection, mitigation, legal research, and the drafting of pleadings. Oral advocacy is possible as students may potentially appear in court, consistent with MCR 8.120. Because Michigan has a unique criminal appellate process which allows for factual development on direct appeal, interns have an opportunity to work in both trial and appellate courts, and to attend trial court hearings and Court of Appeals arguments.

SADO is a hybrid work environment, and interns will have the opportunity to work remotely and in-person in either SADO's Detroit or Lansing offices. There is also the potential for client visits and court attendance throughout Michigan. The internship programs will run from late May through August 2027. Precise dates are flexible and will be determined by the school's academic calendar and program. Due to limited resources, our internship opportunities are currently unpaid. We encourage applicants to seek funding from their academic institutions or third-party funders.

To apply, please submit a single PDF with a letter of interest, resume, and writing sample, to internships@sado.org. Please have your subject line read "Summer Internship Application." Your email should indicate which position(s) you are interested in. The deadline for applications is **January 15, 2027**. Decisions will be made on a rolling basis.

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.