The Capital Trial Unit of the Federal Community Defender for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is currently accepting applications for our summer internship program from law students interested in public service and criminal law. Our unit provides pre-trial and trial-stage representation to federal criminal defendants whose cases have been authorized by the U.S. Attorney General as capital prosecutions. We represent clients in a number of federal jurisdictions around the country. We partner with experienced local counsel, investigators, mitigation specialists, and other experts to provide high-level legal representation and support to clients who are at risk of being sentenced to death.

We expect that our interns will assist in some or all of the following:

- Drafting motions, memoranda, and briefs.
- Researching forensic issues, including DNA, fingerprints, hair and fiber, and ballistics.
- Assisting in factual investigation and developing case strategy by reviewing and digesting medical and institutional records and transcripts of prior proceedings.
- Helping to identify, vet, and prep expert witnesses.
- Contributing to mitigation investigation by providing social-science research.
- Assisting in investigation of witnesses.
- Depending on logistical considerations, interns may have the opportunity to observe hearings, participate in moots, and observe oral arguments.

Interns will also receive formal and “on-the-job” substantive training on criminal law as it pertains to capital prosecutions, capital jurisprudence, and the logistical and ethical considerations that arise in death penalty cases.

The internship is open to current 1Ls and 2Ls. Preference will be given to current 2Ls, but current 1Ls with relevant experience and interest are encouraged to apply as well. Qualified students are encouraged to apply electronically by submitting a cover letter, resume, and transcript (unofficial is satisfactory) to PAE_Employment_CTU_Interns@fd.org.

Applicants should highlight their commitment to public interest, advocacy experience, and any background in criminal defense, particularly death-penalty work. Applicants are also encouraged to mention any background in psychology, social work, investigative work, or any other background in public interest work on behalf of underserved communities. Interviews and hiring will be on a rolling basis. The internship is unpaid; however, we will work with schools and other resources to meet the criteria for work study, course credit, or other support. Students are expected to devote 40 hours per week for a ten-week program beginning at the end of May 2021 (exact start date to be announced).