

# **Social Work Program | Internship Opportunity**

## **Federal Defender's Office Eastern District of California**



### **THE FDO's MISSION & OBJECTIVE**

Members of the Federal Defender's Office share a commitment to excellence and a passion for justice in representing indigent people charged or involved with criminal cases in United States District Court. We provide quality legal representation and advice to individuals financially unable to employ counsel in a myriad of federal criminal cases and related matters in the federal courts. The wide range of cases we handle include felonies, misdemeanors, appeals, non-capital habeas matters, and capital habeas matters. We advocate for our clients – we want our legal system to be fair to all. Our mission is to exceed the expectations of our clients every day by providing the highest caliber of legal counsel and advice.

As public defenders, we try to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients, their families, and their communities. This combines zealous legal advocacy with an understanding that for many of our clients the criminal case adds to many other issues that challenge them. Accordingly, we also focus on collateral issues – such as unstable housing, lack of health care, difficult family situations, mental illness, poverty, unemployment, immigration concerns, and substance addiction – that may need to be addressed in conjunction with their criminal case. Often these issues have driven our clients into the criminal justice system and must be resolved to truly keep them out in the future.

Accordingly, we have social workers in both our Sacramento and Fresno offices who counsel clients and aid them in addressing these issues. Our clients live throughout the Central Valley, in cities, towns, and rural areas. Our clients speak dozens of languages and come from diverse communities. Their social support needs are as unique as their backgrounds. Each case is a new opportunity for our social workers to learn about services available and to connect the client with appropriate support in their communities. By helping clients with their social support needs, we hope to enable the best possible resolution of their criminal justice case. We

also cooperate with the Court, the Pretrial Services Office, and the Probation Office in trying to help our clients fill any gap in services that might create recidivism risk.

## **SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY**

The Federal Defender's Office is seeking social work students who have a desire to work alongside our Social Work Team, assisting our clients in producing positive outcomes. This is accomplished in partnership with FDO staff, Federal Probation, Federal Pretrial Services, and outside agencies and organizations. Student interns will advocate for clients by collaborating with outside and partner agencies, as well as Probation and Pretrial (when necessary) to work toward meeting the particular needs of each client. Student interns must be willing to meet with clients in various settings, such as the Sacramento County Jail (escorted by social worker or attorney), the Nevada County Jail, the Federal courthouse, and the FDO office. Student interns must also be willing to work with clients from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, with varying needs and challenges. Additionally, student interns will assist FDO staff with special cases which involve inmates who are seeking **Compassionate Release** from Federal institutions. The student interns will work closely with the FDO Social Work team and attorneys for release planning and follow-up support for clients. Student interns will also have opportunities to work with the Social Work Team in developing and supporting special projects, such as resource fairs, a reentry collaborative, housing and employment partnerships, and more.

Students who have a background in social services or a similar field, or a background in criminal justice with an interest in social services are preferred. We are seeking students who will be able to make a 6-12 month (minimum) commitment, two days each week (12-16 hours total). Other requirements are as follows:

- **Candidate must have the ability to maintain personal, professional boundaries.**
- **Candidate must possess exceptional communication skills (written and oral), to meet professional requirements and demands of the internship.**
- **The ideal candidate will be highly motivated, a self-starter, and able to work well, both independently and collaboratively, with fellow interns, FDO office staff, Federal court personnel, and community service providers.**

Please email the following to Crystal Sheffield, at [crystal\\_sheffield@fd.org](mailto:crystal_sheffield@fd.org):

- ✓ Cover Letter or Letter of Interest
- ✓ Resume
- ✓ 1-2 Page Writing Sample (any topic of interest)