

YOUTH DEFENSE
POLICY AND PRACTICE
CAREER RESOURCE GUIDE

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| The Role of Youth Defense Counsel | 1 |
| Key Distinctions Between Juvenile Court and Adult Court | 2 |
| Careers in Youth Defense | 2 |
| Preparing for a Career in Youth Defense..... | 2 |
| Coursework | 3 |
| Experiential Learning | 3 |
| Securing a Job in Youth Defense | 4 |
| The Power of Informational Interviews | 4 |
| Entry-Level, Front-Line Youth Defender Opportunities..... | 5 |
| Factors to Consider in Evaluating Youth Defender Opportunities | 5 |
| The Application, Interview, and Hiring Process..... | 5 |
| Tips for Interviews and Simulations | 5 |
| Policy Advocacy, Fellowships, and Other Youth Defense Opportunities..... | 6 |
| Policy Advocacy..... | 6 |
| Postgraduate Fellowships..... | 6 |
| Judicial Clerkships | 7 |
| Post-Graduate Debt Management..... | 7 |
| Overview of Resources..... | 7 |
| Overview of the Juvenile Legal Process | 9 |
| Juvenile Court Terminology..... | 10 |
| Youth Defense Policy and Practice Clinical Programs..... | 16 |
| Public Interest Career Fairs | 21 |
| Nationwide..... | 21 |
| Regional..... | 21 |
| Debt Management and Summer Funding Opportunities | 25 |
| Debt Management Resources..... | 25 |
| Summer Funding Opportunities | 25 |
| Project-Based Post-Graduate Fellowships..... | 29 |
| Youth Defense Policy and Practice Organizations | 32 |
| Alabama | 32 |

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Alaska | 33 |
| Arizona | 33 |
| Arkansas | 35 |
| California | 36 |
| Colorado | 38 |
| Connecticut | 39 |
| Delaware | 40 |
| District of Columbia | 41 |
| Florida | 43 |
| Georgia | 44 |
| Hawaii..... | 44 |
| Idaho | 44 |
| Illinois | 45 |
| Indiana | 46 |
| Iowa..... | 48 |
| Kansas | 48 |
| Kentucky..... | 49 |
| Louisiana | 49 |
| Maine | 50 |
| Maryland..... | 50 |
| Massachusetts..... | 52 |
| Michigan..... | 53 |
| Minnesota | 53 |
| Mississippi | 54 |
| Missouri..... | 54 |
| Montana..... | 55 |
| Nebraska | 56 |
| Nevada | 57 |
| New Hampshire..... | 58 |
| New Jersey | 58 |
| New Mexico | 59 |
| New York | 60 |
| North Carolina..... | 61 |

| | |
|---|----|
| North Dakota..... | 62 |
| Ohio..... | 63 |
| Oklahoma..... | 63 |
| Oregon..... | 64 |
| Pennsylvania..... | 65 |
| Rhode Island..... | 66 |
| South Carolina..... | 66 |
| South Dakota..... | 67 |
| Tennessee..... | 68 |
| Texas..... | 69 |
| Utah..... | 70 |
| Vermont..... | 70 |
| Virginia..... | 71 |
| Washington..... | 72 |
| West Virginia..... | 73 |
| Wisconsin..... | 73 |
| Wyoming..... | 74 |
| Other Helpful Career Links and Resources..... | 75 |

Introduction

Every young person facing charges in juvenile court or who is otherwise at risk of losing their liberty has a constitutional right to an attorney. A youth defender plays a critical role in not only fulfilling the constitutional mandate of counsel in juvenile court, but also in unlocking all the other rights that a young person is entitled to in a juvenile court proceeding. Youth defense is a complex and highly specialized area of practice that requires the integration of brain science, adolescent development research, data, racial justice advocacy, criminal law, and youth rights law. Youth defenders are also situated to fight against oppressive structures of racism that disproportionately punish Black, Native/Indigenous, and Latino/a youth, while giving voice to the trauma and strengths of young people to lessen the overall harms of the juvenile legal system. Youth defenders are modern-day civil rights advocates who fight to uphold and secure fundamental due process and equal protection rights of all youth in the juvenile court system. There is an ongoing need to build a corps of specialized youth advocates to secure the rights of all youth exposed to the harms of the juvenile carceral system. To that end, the Gault Center prepared this guide to provide students and others with valuable resources to jumpstart a career in youth defense.

The Role of Youth Defense Counsel

In a series of cases starting in 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court extended bedrock elements of due process and fair treatment to youth facing delinquency proceedings. Arguably the most important of these cases, *In re Gault*,¹ held that youth have the right to counsel in juvenile court proceedings. The Court noted that youth defense counsel was imperative to rectify the dilemma facing youth in juvenile courts where they experienced “the worst of both worlds,”² receiving neither the protections afforded to adults in the criminal legal system nor the individualized care and treatment reserved for youth. The Court clearly observed that youth defense counsel’s role in delinquency proceedings is unique and critical.³ The Court concluded that no matter how many court personnel were charged with looking after the child’s interests, any child facing “the awesome prospect of incarceration” needed “the guiding hand of counsel at every step in the proceedings” against them for the same reasons that adults facing criminal charges need counsel.⁴

Youth defenders play a critical role in helping young people navigate the complexities of the delinquency system and advocating on behalf of young people’s expressed interests to enforce their due process rights. Youth defenders also counsel clients through legal and other related processes; promote accuracy in decision-making; provide alternatives for decision-makers; and monitor institutional treatment, aftercare, and reentry. Effective youth defense is client-centered, individualized, holistic, and developmentally appropriate. To that end, youth defenders must ensure that young people meaningfully participate in their defense and that youth and their families are treated with dignity and respect. Youth

¹ 387 U.S. 1 (1967).

² *Id.* at 19 n.23 (internal quotations and citation omitted).

³ *See id.* at 36 (“The probation officer cannot act as counsel for the child. His role . . . is as arresting officer and witness against the child. Nor can the judge represent the child.”).

⁴ *Id.*

defenders are a critical buffer against injustice and are at the heart of ensuring that the juvenile legal system operates fairly, accurately, and humanely.

Key Distinctions Between Juvenile Court and Adult Court

While youth are afforded most of the same due process rights as adults, juvenile court practice is distinct from adult court practice in many ways. The most obvious difference is that juvenile court cases primarily consist of bench trials (where the judge is the trier of fact) compared to adult court where jury trials are more readily available. Beyond this, however, youth defenders must be knowledgeable about delinquency laws and procedures; versed in adolescent development and the evolving youth-specific jurisprudence; attentive to racial inequities both within and ancillary to the juvenile legal system; equipped to fight against systemic racial injustices and racial biases that harm and unfairly punish Black, Native/Indigenous, and Latino/a youth; competent to effectively counsel youth on making critical legal decisions; able to convey complex legal principles to young clients and families; open to engaging community partners; and deeply informed about the intersection of education, family regulation, and other systems impacting the lives of young people caught up in the juvenile legal system.

While every juvenile court operates differently, this guide contains a flowchart that generally illustrates how a delinquency case proceeds through the juvenile legal process from arrest to expungement. This flowchart can be found in the [Overview of the Juvenile Legal Process](#) section of this guide. Likewise, the language in juvenile court is often quite different from the language used in adult criminal court. This guide also contains a glossary in the [Juvenile Court Terminology](#) section that defines key terms to bolster your understanding of the juvenile court process.

Careers in Youth Defense

A career in youth defense is challenging, rewarding, and achievable. There is a wide range of opportunities for those interested in youth defense issues, ranging from the need for passionate advocates to directly represent children charged with offenses to the advancement of practice and policy reforms across the country. In this field, one can represent youth as a front-line youth defender or an appellate defender, or work in policy advocacy with a law reform organization, youth defense or youth justice think tank, or other social justice organization. With this broad range of options, youth defense is a great place for those interested in fostering innovation and creativity to bring about social, racial, and economic justice.

Preparing for a Career in Youth Defense

The road to becoming a champion for youth rights starts well before entering the legal workforce. Using your undergraduate and law school experiences to attain and hone key skills is the perfect way to jumpstart a successful career in youth defense. Youth defense is a highly specialized practice that requires a unique set of skills and an in-depth understanding of an evolving body of youth rights jurisprudence, adolescent development research, and racial justice principles. Aside from legal

knowledge, representing youth in delinquency proceedings requires an understanding of both systemic inequities and racial biases that disproportionately harm Black, Native/Indigenous, and Latino/a youth in the juvenile legal system; knowledge on how to utilize adolescent development research as a mitigating factor in juvenile court; the ability to communicate complex legal principles to young clients; and a familiarity with community-based services and programs. Youth defenders must have superior interpersonal skills and empathy; possess strong analytical, oral advocacy, and practical writing skills; and be courageous and willing to go against the status quo to zealously advocate on behalf of their clients' expressed interests. Individuals interested in youth defense can begin to acquire these skills, experiences, and personal attributes through their coursework and by taking advantage of experiential learning opportunities.

Coursework

Students can begin building the foundational knowledge required for a career in youth defense early on in their academic careers. General coursework in adolescent development, child psychology, and similar areas of study will help students better understand the evolving body of scientific and social research that drives youth defense. Legal coursework in criminal law, criminal procedure, advanced criminal procedure, evidence, legal ethics, legal writing, and trial advocacy are essential to help students understand the doctrinal and practical concepts that underscore youth defense work. Interested students may also explore electives that touch on special education law and disability law given their strong intersection with youth defense practice. Some schools may offer courses that contextualize juvenile delinquency within the realm of criminal law as part of a broader discussion about youth justice and child advocacy. These courses may also touch on policy reform and legislative efforts to address systemic issues that arise in the juvenile legal system.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning provides students with a unique opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real-world setting. Employers in the youth defense field look to hire individuals who have a demonstrated interest in the work. Internships and externships are an excellent way for undergraduate, graduate, and law students to gain exposure to the youth defense field, develop key skills, and build their resumes. Internships and externships allow students to explore a variety of areas within the youth defense field to find their niche. While most internships and externships are unpaid, employers are often willing to work with the student's school to award academic credit. Students who are not receiving academic credit may also qualify to receive funding for summer positions through various grant programs. Information on these programs can be found in the [Debt Management and Summer Funding Opportunities](#) section of this guide. Students should begin actively looking and applying for summer positions as early as possible, sometimes a full academic year in advance and no later than early spring semester.

In addition to internships and externships, law students should take advantage of clinical education during their 2L or 3L/4LE year, where available, to prepare for a career in youth defense. This hands-on learning experience with clients facing legal issues, extensive training, and supervision provides students with an invaluable opportunity to be a lawyer. Some law schools have specific youth defense and/or

child advocacy programs. Please refer to the [Youth Defense Policy and Practice Clinical Programs](#) section of this guide for more information. For students who are attending institutions where a youth-specific clinical program is not available, participating in a criminal defense clinic or other clinic that requires direct representation of clients facing similar systemic barriers or involves policy advocacy will equip students with transferrable skills that are useful in the youth defense field. Students should also feel empowered to request youth defense clinical programs and/or related course offerings and form student groups/committees to develop an implementation plan and strategy to make such programs and courses available to students. We encourage interested students and institutions to reach out to the Gault Center at inquiries@defendyouthrights.org for support in advocating for and starting youth defense-specific clinics, courses, and student groups.

Securing a Job in Youth Defense

There is a broad array of youth defense delivery systems across the country. Defense services in some states are coordinated at a state level, while in others they are managed at the county level. Within these systems, youth defense attorneys may work for public defender offices, nonprofit law centers, appointed or contract counsel panels, boutique law firms, or law school clinical programs. Given the varied nature of systems across the country, navigating the job search in the youth defense field can be daunting without proper guidance and direction. Interested students should take advantage of resources at their schools, within their communities, and at organizations like the Gault Center to get a head start. It is best to think about the geographic locations that you are open to practicing in and explore the types of youth defense opportunities available in those areas to guide your overall job search. A list of youth defense organizations can be found in the [Youth Defense Policy and Practice Organizations](#) section of this guide.

The Power of Informational Interviews

Setting up informational interviews with alumni or other contacts in the youth defense field is a powerful networking tool. Informational interviews are distinct from job interviews. Unlike a job interview, the purpose of an informational interview is not to solicit a job (in the immediate sense); rather, the purpose is to build rapport with contacts and learn more about the practice and organization, hiring methods, and future employment opportunities. To prepare for an informational interview, students should thoroughly research the individual and the organization and draft three to five well-informed questions. Topics for questions include the organization and its mission, practice areas of interest, skills and background required, entry-level opportunities, career mobility, career trajectory, etc. There are two important rules to keep in mind about informational interviews: (1) the requester should not attach or offer a resume without being asked for it; and (2) the requester should not ask the contact for a job before or during the interview. Students can find a link to a step-by-step guide on informational interviews and other networking tools in the [Other Helpful Career Links and Resources](#) section of this guide.

Entry-Level, Front-Line Youth Defender Opportunities

The availability of entry-level opportunities varies by jurisdiction and office. Some jurisdictions and offices allow entry-level candidates to apply directly for youth defender positions during the traditional law school fall and winter recruitment processes, while others require candidates to apply outside of this process as positions become available. For example, in New York City, the Juvenile Rights Practice of the Legal Aid Society accepts applications for positions within the Division starting in August of the year prior to entry. In contrast, the Maryland Office of the Public Defender specifically advertises for youth positions as they become available and offers are contingent on passing the Maryland Bar.

Factors to Consider in Evaluating Youth Defender Opportunities

The daily practice of youth defenders is influenced by the jurisdiction, type of delivery system, and culture of the organization. Since youth defense is a highly specialized practice, it is important to get a sense of the training opportunities that are available for new hires. It is also necessary for applicants to ascertain the caseload, office environment, level of supervision, mentorship opportunities, and nature of youth defense practice (e.g., whether the office provides holistic representation) in offices of particular interest. Outside of firsthand experience from internships/externships, alumni networks and law school faculty are great resources to get this insight.

The Application, Interview, and Hiring Process

Applicants are typically required to submit a cover letter, resume, short writing sample (e.g., motion or legal research memo), transcripts, references, and sometimes responses to a questionnaire relating to the applicant's background, interests, and desire to work in the field. The interview process ordinarily consists of multiple stages, with the first interview being a screening interview and subsequent interviews being conducted by a panel of attorneys and possibly executives of the hiring organization. During the interview process, applicants should be prepared to answer questions related to the applicant's interest in youth defense, reply to hypothetical questions, and engage in simulations such as delivering opening and/or closing statements and facilitating a mock client interview. While the hiring timeline varies between agencies, students should begin actively putting together materials and requesting references no later than October of their final year of study. Students should expect to interview in the fall, over winter break, and throughout the first half of the spring semester, and anticipate employers to make hiring decisions between late spring and early summer. Because some organizations do not accept applications until the applicant has passed that state's bar exam, it is important to research the hiring process for each organization to which you apply.

Tips for Interviews and Simulations

For the screening interview, applicants should be prepared to clearly and succinctly articulate why they want to be a youth defender and why they are applying to a particular office. Applicants should refer to specific experiences that led them to pursue a career in youth defense and be prepared to discuss their clinical experience. If an applicant did not participate in a clinic, that applicant should be prepared to

explain why and describe what measures they have taken to gain other practical legal experience. Applicants should be prepared to demonstrate their willingness and ability to work with a diverse population of youth. Applicants will likely encounter questions regarding their comfort level and philosophy on defending clients charged with serious crimes (e.g., child molestation, murder, or rape). Applicants should always keep a lawyer's ethical obligations in mind when responding to questions about past clients or cases. The Public Defender Handbook published by the Public Interest Law Center at NYU School of Law is a great resource to help applicants prepare for youth defense interviews. A link to this handbook can be found in the [Other Helpful Career Links and Resources](#) section. Note that, in contrast to this guide, the Public Defender Handbook discusses securing a job in the public defense sector more generally (i.e., in the adult criminal context).

The hypotheticals that applicants may encounter during the interview process are most likely going to test the applicant's ability to communicate an attorney's ethical obligations to their client; awareness of the difference between expressed or stated interest representation (attorney's representation is guided by what the client wants) and best interest representation (attorney determines what is best for the client); and how the applicant balances the tension between being a zealous advocate and adhering to other ethical duties as a lawyer.

Policy Advocacy, Fellowships, and Other Youth Defense Opportunities

Policy Advocacy

In addition to litigation opportunities, those interested in policy reform can seek opportunities within law reform organizations, youth defense or youth justice think tanks, and other social justice organizations to engage in policy advocacy. Since many of these organizations may not have annual recruitment, it is important for interested candidates to proactively reach out to organizations of interest to set up informational interviews and learn about current or future employment opportunities. Many of these organizations host fellowship projects funded by outside organizations and some of these organizations also have in-house fellowship opportunities, which are described in more detail below. The [Public Service Job Directory](#) (PSJD) is a great place to search for organizations and employment opportunities that engage in policy advocacy. More information about PSJD and other resources can be found in the [Other Helpful Career Links and Resources](#) section of this guide.

Postgraduate Fellowships

There is an array of postgraduate fellowships available to students to jumpstart a career in youth defense, including project-based fellowships, organizational fellowships, and teaching fellowships. Project-based fellowships typically fund student-proposed projects that serve unmet legal needs. To apply for these fellowships, candidates usually seek a host organization and collaborate with the host organization to put together a fellowship proposal and apply for funding through various programs. In some cases, candidates may apply for support on their own (i.e., without a host organization) to start a new project or organization. The three most well-known fellowship opportunities are Equal Justice Works, Skadden, and Soros Justice Fellowships. Information about project-based fellowship opportunities can be found in the [Project-Based Post-Graduate Fellowships](#) section of this guide.

Organizational fellowships are opportunities within existing organizations for a one- or two-year term where fellows are hired as staff members for the duration of the fellowship period. Graduates apply to organizational fellowships in a similar manner as applying for an in-house job. The Gault Fellowship at the Gault Center is an example of an organizational fellowship.

Teaching fellowships offer graduates the opportunity to teach law in a clinical setting, supervise law students, manage a small caseload, and earn an advanced degree. The Prettyman Fellowship at Georgetown University Law Center is an example of a teaching fellowship. More information about organizational fellowships and teaching fellowships related to youth defense can be found in the [Youth Defense Policy and Practice Organizations](#) section of this guide.

Judicial Clerkships

Judicial clerkships in juvenile court at the state level offer a unique opportunity for interested students to explore youth defense practice and gain exposure to the juvenile court process more generally. As a judicial law clerk, one has the opportunity to assess the delinquency process from all angles: prosecution, defense, and the bench. Serving in this capacity may give individuals keen insight into youth defense practice and systemic issues.

Post-Graduate Debt Management

As the cost of legal education continues to rise, students may be concerned about how to manage student loan debt. While managing loan debt is a huge financial burden and is not an easy feat, the presence of student loan debt should not automatically preclude students from obtaining public interest employment right out of law school. There are several programs that assist students with paying back educational debt, including Loan Repayment Assistance Programs (LRAP) through schools, employers, bar associations, or local or state governments, in addition to the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Additional information on these programs and other debt management resources can be found in the [Debt Management and Summer Funding Resources](#) section of this guide.

Overview of Resources

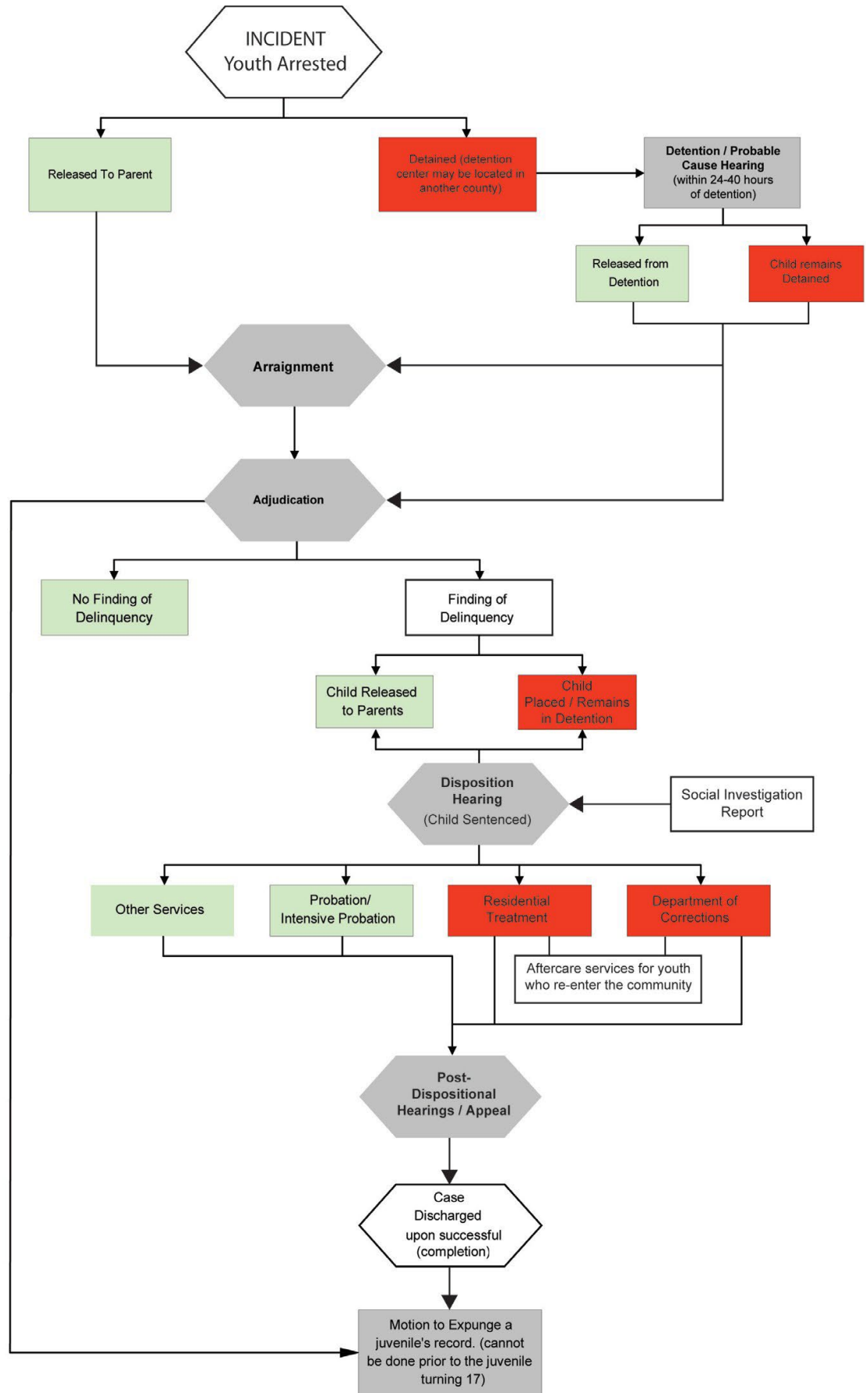
This guide contains the following resources to help interested students and graduates with their career search in the youth defense field.

- [Overview of the Juvenile Legal Process](#)
- [Juvenile Court Terminology](#)
- [Youth Defense Policy and Practice Clinical Programs](#)
- [Public Interest Career Fairs](#)
- [Debt Management and Summer Funding Opportunities](#)

- [Project-Based, Post-Graduate Fellowships](#)
- [Youth Defense Policy and Practice Organizations](#)
- [Other Helpful Career Links and Resources](#)

If you have any questions or comments about the information contained in this guide, please contact the Gault Center by sending an email to inquiries@defendyouthrights.org.

Overview of the Juvenile Legal Process



Juvenile Court Terminology

Adjudication [of Delinquency]

Analogous to an adult “conviction,” an adjudication is a formal finding by the juvenile court, after a fact-finding hearing or a guilty plea/admission, that the youth has committed the act of which they are charged.

Adjudicatory Hearing

The fact-finding phase (i.e., the trial) of a juvenile case. At this hearing, the judge—or, in a limited number of jurisdictions, the jury—receives and weighs the evidence to determine whether the facts prove the charges alleged in the delinquency petition beyond a reasonable doubt. If the youth is found guilty (or involved) at the adjudicatory hearing, this finding is called an “adjudication.”

Adolescent Development

The process through which “biological, cognitive, emotional and social development unfolds and interacts during the second decade of life.”⁵ The study of adolescent development is primarily dominated by psychology, although other disciplines such as biology and neuroscience help inform our understanding of adolescence. Increasingly, researchers have been studying the impact of context (e.g., families, peers, schools, neighborhoods, culture) on adolescent development and how such contexts contribute to both positive and negative outcomes, such as a child’s inability to fully appreciate long-term consequences. Counsel should be knowledgeable about the key aspects of adolescent development that inform specific legal questions regarding competence in legal proceedings, culpability, mitigation, and amenability to treatment and healthy community engagement.

Adult Prosecution

If a juvenile court either loses or gives up jurisdiction over a child alleged to have committed a crime, that child is tried as an adult in a criminal court. The processes allowing for adult prosecution vary by jurisdiction and may include statutes that require children of a certain age or children alleged to have committed a specified crime to be automatically tried as adults (sometimes known as “direct file” cases) or may require a hearing in which the court—either adult or youth—decides which court should have jurisdiction over a child (often referred to as “transfer” or “waiver”). *See also* Transfer/Waiver of Jurisdiction.

Aftercare

Also known as “parole” in some jurisdictions, aftercare involves the supervision of a youth who has returned to the community on conditional release following commitment or incarceration. The youth must comply with certain conditions of release and is monitored by a caseworker or parole officer. Parole can be revoked if the youth does not comply with their release conditions.

Arraignment

A portion of the “initial hearing,” interchangeable with the term “presentment,” in which the youth is brought to court and read the formal charges against them that are alleged in the petition. This is the

⁵ RICHARD LERNER & LAURENCE D. STEINBERG, HANDBOOK OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY (2ND ED. 2004).

stage at which a youth must admit or deny the charges. Court-appointed or private counsel for the youth must be present at this proceeding. *See also* Initial Hearing.

Blended Sentencing

A sentencing or disposition option that allows either the juvenile court to impose tougher punitive adult sentencing measures on a child (juvenile blended sentencing) or allows an adult criminal court to impose juvenile dispositional options (criminal blended sentencing) on a child tried as an adult. Only certain jurisdictions allow these types of sentencing options.

Collateral Consequences

Involvement in the juvenile system may have consequences for youth beyond the immediate court case. These secondary consequences may include, but are not limited to, fines, the requirement to register as a sex offender, the loss or restriction of a professional license, eviction from public housing, denial of secondary education or college admission, prohibitions against owning a firearm, and immigration consequences.

Commitment (also known as Placement or Incarceration)

At disposition, commitment is one of the options available to the court as a possible disposition. It is the transfer of legal responsibility over the child to the state and often includes placement in a private or state-run facility. In many jurisdictions, the court will impose an indeterminate sentence upon transferring custody of the youth to a state agency, allowing the agency to determine when the youth may be released from incarceration based on the youth's behavior, noted "rehabilitation," and the youth's prior juvenile record. A youth may also be subject to commitment as a sanction resulting from a probation revocation hearing. Commitment occurs only after adjudication, as opposed to "detention," where a youth may be placed pending an adjudicatory or disposition hearing.

Competence to Stand Trial

Competence, or fitness, to stand trial requires that a young person have both "sufficient present ability to consult with his lawyer with a reasonable degree of rational understanding" and a "rational as well as factual understanding of the proceedings against him."⁶ Counsel must be able to recognize when a young person's ability to participate in their own defense or to understand the nature and purpose of proceedings may be compromised due to developmental stage, mental health challenges, or disabilities.

Culpability

Culpability means guilt or blameworthiness. However, adolescent development research highlights that youth have diminished capacity to, among other things, understand or process mistakes, learn from experience, engage in logical reasoning, control their impulses, and understand the reactions of others. These limitations in development diminish a young person's personal culpability.

Deferred Adjudication

This arises when a judge decides not to adjudicate the youth and instead imposes conditions that, if met, will result in dismissal of the charges. This is technically not "diversion," given that the youth is court-

⁶ Dusky v. United States, 362 U.S. 402, 402 (1960).

involved and subject to the court's jurisdiction. However, if a youth meets the court's requirements, a deferred adjudication results in a non-adjudicatory resolution and the eventual dismissal of the petition. A variation on this is when the court decides to grant a "stay of adjudication," which suspends the adjudication to give a young person an opportunity to follow conditions set forth by the court, which if satisfied, results in a dismissal without a record of the adjudication. *See also* Diversion.

Delinquent Act

An offense committed by a youth that would be classified as a crime if committed by an adult.

Detention

Youth charged with delinquent acts may be detained by court order pending an adjudicatory and/or disposition hearing. A youth may be placed in a detention center at different points throughout the case. At times, an adjudicated youth may be held in detention during a period of their commitment. There are different levels of detention for youth. "Secure detention" involves holding the child at a locked detention facility. "Shelter homes," sometimes referred to as "non-secure detention," involve a group facility where a child may be able to leave the premises for school or other pre-approved appointments. "Home detention" may also be an option and usually requires a child to remain home, except for school or appointments, and often includes electronic monitoring with GPS or an ankle monitor. In jurisdictions where there is no juvenile detention facility, children may be detained pre-trial in adult facilities. *See also* Commitment.

Detention Hearing

A hearing in which the judge decides whether to detain the child pending an adjudicatory hearing in a delinquency matter. Most jurisdictions require a detention hearing to be held within 48 to 72 hours after the detention commences to determine whether continued detention is necessary. There must be a finding of probable cause before pre-adjudicatory detention is permitted. If probable cause is found, state statutes vary greatly as to the permissible grounds for continuing detention pending an adjudicatory hearing.

Developmentally Appropriate Language

An approach to communicate with children and adolescents that considers the cognitive differences particular to developmental stages. While adolescents may demonstrate the ability to understand and reason better than younger children, adolescents' abilities to understand and reason continue to develop until their mid-to late 20s. As a result, juvenile court practitioners should carefully consider the language used and the structure of questions asked when communicating with adolescents.

Disposition

The juvenile equivalent of an adult sentence, disposition is a final decision as to how a youth's case is handled after an adjudication. Dispositions typically include either probation or commitment. Disposition differs from adult sentencing in that its objective is not punishment. Disposition outcomes should be reflective of the purpose clause of the state's juvenile court, which can include "rehabilitation," "balanced and restorative justice," and other objectives. Disposition orders from the court vary and may include, but are not limited to, fines, restitution, community service, probation, substance abuse treatment, mental health therapy, participation in other community activities or

programs, in-home placement under supervision or probation, and out-of-home placement in commitment facilities. *See also* Disposition Hearing; Disposition Order; Disposition Plan/Report.

Disposition Hearing

Akin to a sentencing hearing in criminal court, the disposition hearing is held after a youth has been adjudicated. At this phase, the judge hears recommendations from the prosecution, probation, defense, child's parents, and/or other potential interested parties. The disposition hearing is a critical phase for youth defenders to advocate for tailored and individualized disposition plans that promote positive development of youth, aligned with their expressed interests. *See also* Disposition; Disposition Order; Disposition Plan/Report.

Disposition Order

A written, signed document handed down by the court that states the disposition (treatment and/or sanctions) chosen for the youth and any conditions of that disposition. *See also* Disposition; Disposition Hearing; Disposition Plan/Report.

Disposition Plan/Report

In preparation for a disposition hearing, various parties will prepare plans or reports outlining their recommendations to the court. These proposed plans are typically prepared by the probation department and the defense, though other parties, such as the prosecution or service providers, may also present reports or recommendations. In preparation of anticipated plans, a young person may request or be required to undergo psychological evaluations, diagnostic tests, or a period of confinement in a diagnostic facility to aid in the determination of an appropriate disposition. *See also* Disposition; Disposition Hearing; Disposition Order; Pre-disposition Report.

Diversion

Refers to any program that is offered as an alternative to formal court involvement. Diversion is designed to enable youth to avoid a formal charge through the filing of a petition, which could result in adverse collateral consequences and, ultimately, a juvenile delinquency record. By successfully completing the requirements of a diversion program run by the police department, court, prosecutor's office, or an outside agency, the youth can avoid formal prosecution. While true diversion programs are those that divert the child from any formal charge in the juvenile system, many practitioners and jurisdictions use the term "diversion" to include programs that are initiated after a petition has been filed against the child, but which result in a non-adjudicatory resolution and the eventual dismissal of the petition. In some jurisdictions, diversion is also called "Informal Adjustment." *See also* Deferred Adjudication.

Guardian *ad Litem*

An attorney or advocate appointed by a court to represent the best interests of a child in court proceedings, including juvenile delinquency cases. The role of the guardian ad litem is different from the defense attorney's role, which is to represent the expressed interests of the child-client in delinquency cases.

Initial Hearing

The first hearing a child accused of a delinquent act will have in front of a judge. The structure of this hearing varies by jurisdiction, but it typically includes assignment of counsel, arraignment, a detention determination, and the scheduling of further hearing dates. See also Arraignment.

Intake

Intake is an initial screening and assessment process for children who are arrested and brought to juvenile court. Intake procedures vary between jurisdictions but are typically conducted by intake officers, probation staff, case and social workers, or police, and occur prior to seeing a judge. At the intake screening, each youth is evaluated to determine their appropriateness for release or referral to a diversionary program, or whether the matter should be referred for prosecution.

Petition

The charging document filed in juvenile court by the State. The petition formally initiates a juvenile proceeding alleging that a youth is delinquent and describing the alleged offenses committed by the youth. The petition may ask that the court assume jurisdiction over the youth or ask that the youth be transferred to criminal court for prosecution as an adult. A petition is similar to a complaint in adult court.

Post-disposition

Post-disposition refers to the period following the court's entry of a disposition order and lasts until the youth is no longer under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court or any state agency to which they were transferred as a result of a commitment. During the post-disposition phase, a variety of procedures or hearings regarding the client can require the assistance of counsel. These include, but are not limited to, conducting an appeal or helping the client obtain new appellate counsel; representing the youth in probation and parole violation hearings, commitment review hearings, or extension of incarceration hearings; challenging conditions of confinement that violate the client's state and constitutional rights or circumvent services ordered by the court; and any other legal counseling required until the youth is no longer under the jurisdiction of the court.

Pre-disposition Report

Sometimes called a "social history" or "social study," a pre-disposition report is prepared by probation staff and outlines the child's background and recommends a disposition plan. It is a compilation of information on the circumstances of the current offense, any past offense(s), family history, educational progress, and community involvement. Based on these factors, the agency will often make recommendations for disposition. *See also* Disposition Plan/Report; Social History.

Probation

A disposition option available to the court as an alternative to commitment, in which an adjudicated youth may be released back into the community under certain conditions and/or under the supervision of a probation officer for a specified or indeterminate period of time.

Probation Officer

An employee of the probation department who works closely with the court and is involved with a youth's case at various stages of the proceedings. Preliminarily, a probation officer may perform the initial intake interview to determine if a case can be diverted from the juvenile court. Subsequently, if a petition is filed, a probation officer may be responsible for supervising youth who are released. Probation officers often prepare a pre-disposition report for the court after a child has been adjudicated and make recommendations for disposition. If a youth is placed on probation at disposition, the probation officer provides supervision of the youth.

Revocation Hearings/Violation Hearings

A review hearing at which the state or supervisory agency is alleging that the youth has not fulfilled their conditions of parole, probation, or pre-trial release. If the court revokes the child's pre-trial release, probation, or parole, it may move the youth to some form of out-of-home placement.

Risk Assessment Instrument

A tool used to assess a youth's likelihood (or risk) of future reoffending. Factors on these instruments can reflect both life circumstances (e.g., history of child abuse) and personal characteristics (e.g., attitudes and past behaviors) to predict future behavior. Within the context of the juvenile court system, risk assessment instruments can be used at different decision-making points (e.g., diversion, detention, or disposition) and may vary in length. Because there are several different forms of risk assessment instruments used by juvenile court systems across the country, it is important to examine both the presence of racial biases and systemic inequities embedded within the factors considered by the instrument as well as the impact of the instrument in perpetuating racial disparities.

Social History

A collection of records regarding the youth's familial, occupational, educational, and community background, covering various aspects of the youth's life that may be relevant to an evaluation of the appropriate level of services recommended for a young person. In some jurisdictions, social history is a general term for any collection of such records, while in others, it is the term used for a pre-disposition report compiled by probation. *See Pre-disposition Report.*

Status Offense

An offense that would not be a crime if it were committed by an adult. Examples of these non-criminal offenses that are only applicable to children include truancy, curfew violations, running away from home, incorrigibility, and ungovernability.

Transfer/Waiver of Jurisdiction

The legal procedure for determining whether the juvenile court will retain jurisdiction over a juvenile case or whether the matter will be sent to adult criminal court. A reverse waiver occurs where a child is originally charged in adult court but is sent back to juvenile court for trial or disposition. Please see the introduction to Part VI of the [National Juvenile Defense Standards](#) for a more detailed description of the various forms of transfer available in the United States. *See Adult Prosecution.*

Youth Defense Policy and Practice Clinical Programs

The following list of clinical programs features law schools that offer a standalone youth defense clinic or a criminal or child advocacy clinic where youth defense is a component. This list is not comprehensive and does not include child advocacy clinics that focus solely on dependency, family law, education, or other related areas of child advocacy. Please refer to your law school's clinical department for the most up-to-date information on your school's experiential learning offerings.

Please contact the Gault Center at inquiries@defendyouthrights.org with additions, deletions, or corrections to this list.

American University Washington College of Law | Washington, DC
[Criminal Justice Clinic](#)

Barry University | Orlando, FL
[Juvenile Defense Clinic](#)

Boston University School of Law | Boston, MA
[Criminal Law Clinical Program – Public Defender Program \(Juvenile\)](#)

Brooklyn Law School | Brooklyn, NY
[Youth Defense & Reentry Legal Services Clinic](#)

Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law | Washington, DC
[D.C. Law Students in Court: Criminal/Juvenile Division Clinic](#)

Cornell Law School | Ithaca, NY
[Child Advocacy Practicum](#)

Creighton University School of Law | Omaha, NE
[Juvenile Justice Legal Clinic](#)

Drake University Law School | Des Moines, IA
[Children's Rights Clinic](#)

Duquesne University School of Law | Pittsburgh, PA
[Youth Advocacy Clinic](#)

Emory University School of Law | Atlanta, GA
[Barton Juvenile Defender Clinic](#)

Florida State University College of Law | Tallahassee, FL
[Children's Advocacy Clinic](#)

Georgetown Law | Washington, DC

[Juvenile Justice Clinic & Initiative](#)

Harvard Law School | Cambridge, MA

[Child Advocacy Clinic](#) & [Criminal Justice Institute](#)

Hofstra Law | Hempstead, NY

[Youth Advocacy Clinic](#)

Louisiana State University Law Center | Baton Rouge, LA

[Juvenile Defense Clinic](#)

Loyola Law School | Chicago, IL

[Civitas ChildLaw Clinic](#)

Loyola Law School | Los Angeles, CA

[Juvenile Justice Clinic](#) & [Juvenile Innocence and Fair Sentencing Clinic](#)

Loyola University New Orleans College of Law | New Orleans, LA

[Youth Justice Clinic](#)

New York University School of Law | New York, NY

[Juvenile Defender Clinic](#)

North Carolina Central School of Law | Durham, NC

[Juvenile Law Clinic](#)

Northern Kentucky Salmon P. Chase College of Law | Highland Heights, KY

[Children's Law Center Clinic](#)

Northwestern Pritzker School of Law | Chicago, IL

[Bluhm Legal Clinic Children and Family Justice Center](#) & [Bluhm Legal Clinic Wrongful Convictions of Youth](#)

The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law | Columbus, OH

[Justice for Children Clinic](#)

Rutgers School of Law - Camden | Camden, NJ

[Children's Justice Clinic](#)

Rutgers School of Law - Newark | Newark, NJ

[Criminal & Youth Justice Clinic](#)

St. Mary's University School of Law | San Antonio, TX

[Criminal Justice Clinic](#)

St. Thomas University School of Law | Miami Gardens, FL
[Criminal Practice Externship](#)

Seattle University School of Law | Seattle, WA
[Youth Advocacy Clinic](#) & [Civil Rights Clinic](#)

Southern University Law Center | Baton Rouge, LA
[Juvenile Law Clinic](#)

Southwestern Law School | Los Angeles, CA
[Youth Offender Parole Clinic](#)

Suffolk University Law School | Boston, MA
[Juvenile Defenders Clinic](#)

Stetson University College of Law | Gulfport, FL
[Child Advocacy Clinic](#)

Texas Tech University School of Law | Lubbock, TX
[Criminal Defense Clinic](#)

Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law | Houston, TX
[Criminal Defense/Title IX Clinic](#)

Tulane University Law School | New Orleans, LA
[Juvenile Litigation Clinic](#)

University of Akron School of Law | Akron, OH
[Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program](#)

University of California – Berkeley | Berkeley, CA
[East Bay Community Law Center, Youth Defender Clinic](#)

The University of Chicago Law School | Chicago, IL
[Criminal and Juvenile Justice Clinic](#)

University of Colorado - Boulder Law School | Boulder, CO
[Juvenile and Family Law Center](#)

University of Connecticut School of Law | Hartford, CT
[Child Advocacy Clinic](#)

University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law | Washington, DC
[Youth Justice Clinic](#)

University of Florida Levin College of Law | Gainesville, FL
[Gator TeamChild Juvenile Law Clinic](#)

University of Georgia School of Law | Athens, GA
[Criminal Defense Practicum](#)

University of Kansas School of Law | Lawrence, KS
[Legal Aid Clinic](#)

University of Maine School of Law | Portland, ME
[Youth Justice Clinic](#)

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law | Baltimore, MD
[Youth, Education, and Justice Clinic](#)

University of Michigan Law School | Ann Arbor, MI
[Juvenile Justice Clinic](#)

University of Minnesota Law School | Minneapolis, MN
[Child Advocacy and Juvenile Justice Clinic](#)

University of Mississippi School of Law | University, MS
[MacArthur Justice Clinic](#)

University of North Carolina School of Law at Chapel Hill | Chapel Hill, NC
[Youth Justice Clinic](#)

University of Richmond School of Law | Richmond, VA
[Children's Defense Clinic](#)

University of San Diego School of Law | San Diego, CA
[Child Advocacy Clinic](#)

University of San Francisco School of Law | San Francisco, CA
[Criminal and Juvenile Justice Law Clinic](#)

University of South Carolina School of Law | Columbia, SC
[Youth Defender Clinic](#)

University of St. Thomas School of Law | St. Paul, MN
[Criminal and Juvenile Defense Clinic](#)

University of Tennessee College of Law | Knoxville, TN
[Advocacy Clinic](#)

University of Texas at Austin School of Law | Austin, TX
[Juvenile Justice Clinic](#)

University of Virginia School of Law | Charlottesville, VA
[Youth Advocacy Clinic](#) & [Holistic Youth Defense Clinic](#)

University of Washington School of Law | Seattle, WA
[Tools for Social Change: Race and Justice Clinic](#)

University of Wisconsin Law School | Madison, WI
[Frank J. Remington Public Defender Project](#)

University of Wyoming College of Law | Laramie, WY
[Family and Child Legal Advocacy Clinic](#) & [Defender Aid Clinic](#)

Vanderbilt Law School | Nashville, TN
[Youth Opportunity Clinic](#)

Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School | Lansing, MI
[Public Defender Clinic](#)

Public Interest Career Fairs

The following list provides a snapshot of various public interest career fairs offered both at the national and regional level. This list is not comprehensive. Please visit both the website and your law school's career office for the most up-to-date information. Please note that some of these fairs are held virtually; please visit their websites for further information.

Nationwide

[Equal Justice Works Career Fair](#)

Date: Fall Semester (Middle/End of October)

Sponsor: Equal Justice Works

The Annual Equal Justice Works Career Fair is the largest public interest legal career fair in the country, providing the opportunity for over 1,400 students to explore career options with more than 175 public interest employers. The Career Fair provides access to job opportunities for law students; connects employers with talented attorneys and law students; and offers a multitude of skill-building and career advising sessions with experts from around the country. Students and recent graduates can apply for interviews through mid-September and may register to attend informal table talk networking and workshop sessions through late October.

Regional

[Annual Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsor: Chicago Area Law School Consortium

The Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference enables employers from public interest and government organizations and law students to gather for a day of interviews and informal networking. The fair is held in Chicago, IL, at Northwestern University School of Law and is open to students from law schools in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The conference is free to employers and students.

[Annual Southern California Public Interest/Public Sector Career Day](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Mid-February)

Sponsors: California Western, Chapman, La Verne, Loyola, Pepperdine, Southwestern, Thomas Jefferson, UC Irvine, UCLA, University of San Diego, University of Southern California, Western State, and Whittier

Career Day takes place at UCLA Law and includes prescheduled, formal interviews; informal table talks; a series of informal lunchtime discussions on substantive practice areas; and an afternoon panel discussion. The interviews are open only to students from sponsoring law schools, but the other activities are open to law students and alumni throughout the country.

[Georgetown/George Washington Law Public Sector Recruiting Program](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January)

Sponsors: Georgetown University Law Center and George Washington University Law School

The Public Sector Recruiting Program is a daylong job fair for Georgetown and George Washington law students to interview for summer internships and permanent positions with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and public interest law firms. The Program consists of prescheduled interviews, table talks, and a resume collection option for employers who cannot interview at the fair.

[Government & Public Interest Interview Program](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Mid-February)

Sponsors: William & Mary Law School, Washington and Lee University School of Law, and University of Richmond School of Law

The Government & Public Interest Interview Program is open to government and public interest employers and law students from sponsoring schools.

[DC/Baltimore Public Service Recruitment Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsors: American University Washington College of Law; Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law; George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School; Howard University School of Law; University of Baltimore School of Law; University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law; and University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

The Annual DC/Baltimore Public Service Recruitment Fair allows students of sponsoring schools to participate in formal interviews, resume collection, and informal table talks with over 100 public interest employers.

[Massachusetts Law School Consortium Government/Public Interest Interview Program](#)

Date: Fall Semester (Early October) and Spring Semester (Late January)

Sponsors: Boston College Law School, Boston University School of Law, Harvard Law School, New England Law—Boston, Northeastern University School of Law, Suffolk University Law School, University of Massachusetts School of Law, and Western New England University School of Law

The program allows students from sponsoring Massachusetts law schools to participate in resume collection and formal, pre-scheduled interviews for summer and permanent positions with various public interest employers. The program is held twice a year at Suffolk University Law School.

[Northern California Public Interest/Public Sector Legal Careers Day](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsors: Stanford Law School, UC Berkeley School of Law, UC Hastings College of the Law, UC Davis School of Law, John F. Kennedy University College of Law, University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law, Golden Gate University School of Law, University of San Francisco School of Law, Santa Clara University School of Law, and OneJustice.

Students from sponsoring schools can participate in formal, pre-scheduled interviews on the day of the program. Students and alumni from any law school are invited to participate in the employer table talk portion of the day.

[Northwest Public Service Career Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsors: Willamette University College of Law, University of Washington School of Law, University of Utah School of Law, University of Oregon School of Law, University of Idaho College of Law, Seattle University School of Law, Lewis & Clark Law School, Gonzaga University School of Law, Brigham Young University Law School, and Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law

The Northwest Public Service Career Fair welcomes all law students and graduates to participate in table talk with public interest employers, but only students and graduates of the sponsoring schools may participate in scheduled interviews. The fair is held in both Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR. Student registration usually opens mid-October, and students may request interviews through mid-January.

[Public Interest Legal Career Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Early February)

Sponsors: Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Brooklyn Law School, Columbia Law School, Cornell Law School, CUNY School of Law, Fordham University School of Law, Hofstra University School of Law, New York Law School, New York University School of Law, Pace University School of Law, Quinnipiac University School of Law, Roger Williams University School of Law, Rutgers Law School, Seton Hall University School of Law, St. John's University School of Law, Syracuse University College of Law, Syracuse University College of Law, Touro Law Center, University at Buffalo School of Law, University of Connecticut School of Law, and Yale Law School

The Public Interest Legal Career Fair, held at New York University School of Law, gives public interest employers the opportunity to meet with students and allows students to interview with employers for internships and permanent jobs, as well as to talk with employers at information tables.

[Public Interest/Public Service \(PI/PS\) Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsors: Temple University Beasley School of Law, Villanova University School of Law, Rutgers Law School—Camden, University of Pennsylvania Law School, Pennsylvania State University—The Dickinson School of Law, Drexel School of Law, and Widener University School of Law

The PI/PS Fair, held at Temple University's Center City Campus, allows students from any of Philadelphia's seven area law schools to meet and interview with public interest employers for summer and permanent positions.

[Public Sector Career Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late February)

Sponsors: Georgia State University College of Law, University of Georgia School of Law, Emory University School of Law, John Marshall School of Law—Atlanta, and Mercer University School of Law

The fair is only open to students at sponsoring law schools. More than 75 government and public interest employers conduct pre-selected and walk-up interviews with 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls for summer internships and permanent positions.

[Texas Public Service Career Fair](#)

Date: Spring Semester (Late January/Early February)

Sponsor: Baylor University, South Texas, Southern Methodist University, St. Mary's University, Texas A&M University, Texas Southern University, Texas Tech University, University of Houston, University of North Texas at Dallas, and The University of Texas

The Texas Public Service Career Fair, hosted at the University of Texas School of Law, is the largest public service job fair for law students in Texas. During the two-day fair, public interest and government employers conduct interviews for paid and unpaid summer and permanent positions. Employers may request to interview 1Ls, 2Ls, 3Ls, domestic and foreign-trained L.L.M.s, and recent graduates (up to one year after graduation) from all nine participating Texas law schools. Also, employers may choose to host informational tables.

Debt Management and Summer Funding Opportunities

The high cost of education and the burden of student loan debt may deter many graduates from pursuing and remaining in public interest careers. Although postgraduate debt management can seem overwhelming, there are a number of programs and resources to help students and graduates manage their debt effectively. Below are examples of resources and summer funding opportunities. This is not a comprehensive list, and individuals should refer directly to the linked websites for the most up-to-date information.

Debt Management Resources

[Equal Justice Works Student Debt Resources](#)

Equal Justice Works Student Debt Resources provides information to students on how to manage their debt.

[Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#)

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program is intended to encourage individuals to enter and continue to work full-time in public service jobs. Under this program, graduates may qualify for forgiveness of the remaining balance due on their William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (Direct Loan Program) loans after they have made 120 qualifying payments on those loans while employed full-time by certain public service employers. For further information, please refer to the website provided above, which contains a PSLF Fact Sheet and Dear Borrower Letter, as well as additional information on eligibility and tracking.

[Income-Driven Repayment Plans](#)

Income-driven repayment plans are designed to make student loan debt more manageable by reducing the monthly payment amount. If you are seeking PSLF, you should repay your federal loans under an income-driven repayment plan. The following income driven repayment plans are available to borrowers: the Income-Based Repayment Plan, the Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan, the Revised Pay As You Earn Repayment Plan, and the Income-Contingent Repayment Plan. Please refer to the website for eligibility requirements, terms and conditions, and how to apply for income-driven repayment plans. The website also features a repayment calculator for graduates to use when determining which plan best suits their needs.

Summer Funding Opportunities

Although many youth defense internships are unpaid, there are a number of programs and scholarships—aside from earning academic credit—that are available to students who commit to working at a public interest placement for the summer. The following list contains nationwide and regional specific summer funding opportunities. Since this list is non-exhaustive, interested students should also visit [PSJD](#) and school career centers to learn more about other summer funding opportunities.

[Black Public Defender Association](#)

The Black Public Defender Association (BPDA) provides a stipend of \$5,000 for Black law students who have secured or are seeking an unpaid internship at a public defender office. Selected fellows will have an opportunity to participate in an intensive trial skills program and will also be paired with a BPDA mentor for the summer.

[Equal Justice America](#)

Equal Justice America provides funding for law students working full-time (35-40 hours per week) for organizations providing direct civil legal assistance for the poor. Fellowships for Summer 2023 were up to \$5,000. This fellowship can be combined with other funding so long as the total amount does not exceed \$12,000.

[Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund](#)

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund (AEF) awards summer fellowships and grants each year to law students from around the nation. The primary purpose of the fellowships is to fund a student's internship within the public interest sector that benefits either the metropolitan Washington, D.C., community-at-large and/or the Asian Pacific American community. Eligible internship placements include federal, state, and local governmental organizations; nonprofit organizations; district attorney and public defender offices; and judicial internships. For all fellowship recipients, AEF requires that the internship be unpaid (except for nominal payment for items such as transportation), be arranged by the student, and extend at least 10 weeks or a total of 400 hours.

[Ms. JD Public Interest Scholarship](#)

Ms. JD annually supports women pursuing public interest careers by offering scholarships for law students working in public interest law over the summer. Unpaid judicial externs also qualify for these scholarships. Students need not have a placement at the time of their application but must send an offer letter to Ms. JD by the beginning of the summer. The application is typically due in March.

[National Lawyers Guild Haywood Burns Fellowships](#)

The Haywood Burns Memorial Fellowship for Social and Economic Justice has its roots in the National Lawyers Guild's (NLG) established tradition of providing legal, political, and educational support to the important progressive movements of the day. This fellowship awards \$3,000 for students to complete a 10-week placement through the Summer Projects Committee. The Haywood Burns Fellowships are designed to encourage students to work in the NLG's tradition of "people's lawyering." Burns Fellowships provoke law students to question traditional notions of how one must practice law and provide a summer experience that will enrich and challenge them. Fellowships may be completed with any existing organization whose mission addresses the needs of underserved individuals and groups. This could be a small nonprofit, a short-staffed community law firm, or an organizing campaign that needs legal assistance. The Haywood Burns Fellowships usually provide a rigorous legal experience as well as a political one. The application is typically due in mid-January.

[Law Firms Sponsoring Split Public Interest Summers](#)

Several law firms have instituted summer programs that enable law students to work part of the summer with the firm and part of the summer with a public interest organization, with the firm paying the students' salaries for the entire summer.

[Hispanic Bar Association of D.C. Foundation](#)

The Hispanic Bar Association of D.C.(HBA-DC) Foundation funds one or more fellowships in an amount between \$7,000 and \$10,000 for first- and second-year law students enrolled in a law school in the District of Columbia or its immediate suburbs to work in a nonprofit legal services agency in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Students must secure sponsorship on their own—with a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization that provides advocacy or direct legal services to persons in the D.C. metropolitan area—then apply to the HBA-DC for funding. Students are required to work full-time for a minimum of eight weeks. The application is typically due in the beginning of April.

[Public Interest Law Initiative](#)

The Public Interest Law Initiative funds law students from across the country to work with legal service agencies in Illinois (primarily in Chicago). Interns receive \$6,200 for working 400 hours full-time during the summer, and \$3,100 for working 200 hours over a semester with the Public Interest Law Initiative, which ensures quality supervision by experienced agency attorneys and provides extra educational, networking, and mentoring opportunities. Funds are awarded directly to the host agency which then pays the intern. Applications for the internships during the fall semester are due early August; spring semester due mid-October; and summer due early November.

[The Sarasota County Bar Association Diversity Scholarship Fund](#)

The Sarasota County Bar Association/Richard R. Garland Diversity Scholarship Program is intended to provide internship opportunities for first- through third-year law students of under-represented minority backgrounds, with an interest in practicing law in Sarasota County upon graduation. The scholarship application is open to law students enrolled in Florida law schools and those enrolled in out-of-state law schools, but who have or had family, school, or community ties to Sarasota County. The student will receive a tuition assistance scholarship in an amount of up to \$5,000, which is payable directly to the student's law school. Diversity interns can also earn wages from their employer. The application is typically due in late January.

[Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles Fran Kandel Public Interest Grant](#)

The Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA) Foundation provides grants of up to \$6,000 to law students for projects that make governmental and social services agencies more accessible and responsive to individuals or groups whose needs are not adequately met. Through its activities, the Foundation seeks to achieve three specific goals: (1) provide help to the disadvantaged by funding projects that will directly benefit the under-represented in the greater Los Angeles area; (2) educate and expose law students to legal concerns affecting the disadvantaged in areas outside of traditional legal practices; and (3) encourage the legal community's involvement in public interest law by funding students who show the capability of and commitment to assisting those in need. The WLALA Fran Kandel Public Interest Grant program enables law students to devote time to public interest projects and exposes them to legal and social concerns of disadvantaged citizens that are not ordinarily experienced

in traditional law practices. Rather than purely academic research, the fellowship is designed to fund a particular project with a tangible outcome. Historically, the Foundation has funded proposals such as information booklets, brochures, educational curricula, and videos. The application is typically due in mid-March.

Project-Based Post-Graduate Fellowships

Project-based fellowships help fund projects that serve unmet legal needs. Applicants for project-based fellowships usually propose their own projects in conjunction with an existing organization. In some cases, fellowships may support start-up funds to establish a new organization or project without a host organization. Below are examples of project-based graduate fellowships.

[Equal Justice Works Fellowships](#)

Equal Justice Works (EJW) Fellowships provide the opportunity for lawyers to positively impact vulnerable communities around the country. Each year EJW selects qualified and passionate lawyers who have developed new and innovative legal projects that can impact lives and serve communities in desperate need of legal assistance. Depending on funding, EJW provides between 60-80 two-year fellowships annually. Fellows receive a competitive salary, generous loan repayment assistance, connections to their prominent sponsors, participation in trainings, and additional support during their two-year tenure. The EJW fellow selection process is highly competitive, and the application deadline is mid-September. The application process for an EJW Fellowship involves four key requirements:

1. You must be a third-year law student, a recent law school graduate, or an experienced private sector attorney who demonstrates a commitment to public interest law. Your law school must be an Equal Justice Works member law school. If your school is not on this list, please email Fellowships@equaljusticeworks.org.
2. You must identify a qualifying nonprofit host organization that will provide you with a full-time position upon receiving a fellowship. Candidates and organizations can partner in any number of ways—a candidate may approach an organization with a proposed project idea, or an organization may recruit an applicant. Candidates may have interned with a host organization but cannot be a current full-time employee with the same organization.
3. The host organization must be willing to be your employer during the two-year fellowship term as well as provide you with supervision, a workspace, employee health and fringe benefits, and the materials (computer, internet access, phone, etc.) that you will need to successfully complete your project.
4. Together with your host organization, you must design a new project that focuses on legal advocacy on behalf of disenfranchised individuals, groups, or issues not adequately represented in our legal system. Legal advocacy includes direct legal representation, legal education, legal training, community organizing, transactional work, policy work, and administrative representation. Visit EJW's [fellow profiles](#) to learn more about current projects. Your project proposal should clearly state how the project will address a specific legal matter, how it will positively impact the targeted population, and how the host organization will support your efforts.

EJW reviews the applications and selects projects that can be matched with potential sponsors. Fellowships are sponsored by private law firms, foundations, individual donors, corporations, and bar associations. Sponsors determine who they would like to interview and schedule the interviews on a rolling basis during the fall and winter. Offers are also made by the sponsors on a rolling basis from November through April.

[Skadden Fellowships](#)

The Skadden Fellowship Program was established in 1988 to commemorate the firm's 40th anniversary, in recognition of the dire need for greater funding for graduating law students who wish to devote their professional lives to improving legal services for under-resourced communities. Fellows can work on projects related to the elderly, the homeless, and the disabled, as well as those deprived of their civil or human rights. The aim of the foundation is to give fellows the freedom to pursue public interest work; thus, the fellows create their own projects at public interest organizations with at least two lawyers on staff before they apply.

Fellowships are awarded for two years to graduating 3Ls and outgoing judicial law clerks who want to work in the public interest field. Fellowship sponsors must be a 501(c)(3) organization that provides civil legal services to the poor, including the working poor, the elderly, the disabled, or those deprived of their civil or human rights. Skadden provides each fellow with a salary and pays all fringe benefits to which an employee of the sponsoring organization would be entitled. For those fellows not covered by a law school low-income protection plan, the firm will pay a fellow's law school debt service for the tuition part of the loan for the duration of the fellowship.

The application deadline is early September. The application contains four essay questions that ask about the applicant's proposed project, past involvement in public interest law, and commitment to public interest law. Applicants must submit the following supporting documents to supplement their application: (1) signed fellowship application including three essays; (2) commitment letter from potential sponsoring organization; (3) two letters of recommendation from a law school professor and a former employer; (4) official law school transcript; and (5) resume.

The foundation works closely with an Advisory Committee comprised of a dozen partners from all of Skadden's U.S. offices to administer the program and select each year's fellows. Each year, the firm receives a large number of applicants from which approximately 100 semifinalists are identified based upon each applicant's qualifications (competency, academic performance, character, and demonstrated commitment to the public interests), demonstrated effectiveness of the sponsoring organization, and the quality of their proposed project. Each applicant is interviewed by one or more members of the Advisory Committee and by the foundation director. From this group, 56 finalists are chosen to be presented to the trustees, composed of seven individuals from outside the firm, Skadden's executive partner, two of-counsel at the firm and one second-year fellow. Skadden chooses 28 recipients, who are notified in mid-November.

[Soros Justice Fellowship Program](#)

The Soros Justice Fellowships fund outstanding individuals to undertake projects that advance reform, spur debate, and catalyze change on a range of issues facing the U.S. criminal legal system. The fellowships are part of a larger effort within the Open Society Foundations to reduce the destructive impact of current criminal justice policies on the lives of individuals, families, and communities in the United States by challenging the overreliance on incarceration and extreme punishment and ensuring a fair and accountable system of justice. Fellows can receive funding through three categories, though only the Advocacy Fellowship is applicable to law students.

The Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships fund lawyers, advocates, grassroots organizers, researchers, and others with unique perspectives to undertake full-time criminal legal reform projects at the local, state, and national levels. Projects may range from litigation to public education to coalition building to grassroots mobilization to policy-driven research. The application deadline for Advocacy Fellowships is in March and projects begin the following fall. Advocacy Fellowships are 18 months in duration and are encouraged to be in conjunction with a host organization. Advocacy Fellowships come with an award of either \$94,500 or \$127,500 (depending on level of experience).

All projects must, at a minimum, relate to one or more of the Justice Fund's broad U.S. criminal justice reform goals: reducing the number of people who are incarcerated or under correctional control, challenging extreme punishment, and promoting fairness and accountability in our systems of justice. Please carefully review the complete guidelines on the website for more details on the specific requirements for each category of fellowships.

Open Society Foundations strongly encourages applications for projects that demonstrate a clear understanding of the intersection of criminal justice issues with the particular needs of low-income communities; Black, Indigenous, and other diverse communities; immigrants; LGBTQ people; women and children; and those otherwise disproportionately affected by harsh criminal legal policies, as well as applications for projects that cut across various criminal legal fields and related sectors, such as education, health and mental health, housing, and employment. Also, Open Society Foundations particularly welcomes applications from individuals directly affected by, or with significant direct personal experience with, the policies, practices, and systems their projects seek to address.

Youth Defense Policy and Practice Organizations

The following list of organizations is non-exhaustive, and the Gault Center does not intend to endorse the organizations or opportunities listed. Please refer to the website provided or contact the organization directly for the most up-to-date information. Individuals may also consider reaching out to the [Gault Center's Regions](#) to be connected with youth defense leaders in your specific jurisdiction.

Please contact the Gault Center at inquiries@defendyouthrights.org with additions, deletions, or corrections to this list.

Alabama

Alabama provides counsel to indigent youth through a state-funded localized system, which includes public defender offices, contract attorneys, and private appointed attorneys.

[Legal Aid Society of Birmingham](#)

2001 Park Place
Birmingham, AL 35203
(205) 251-3516

The Legal Aid Society of Birmingham, a nonprofit service organization affiliated with the Birmingham Bar Association, provides free court-appointed legal representation for children and low-income adults. Legal Aid exists to help those who cannot afford a lawyer. Legal Aid's staff of 20 lawyers represent only indigent persons, as determined by the courts where they work. At the Family Court of Jefferson County, both Birmingham and Bessemer Divisions, Legal Aid represents children accused of delinquency offenses. Legal Aid also serves as guardians ad litem for children who are the subject of abuse and neglect. Legal Aid has internship/externship opportunities available for law students. Students are encouraged to visit Legal Aid's website and/or contact Legal Aid for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 956-8200

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. They are headquartered in Montgomery, AL, but have offices in Atlanta, New Orleans, Miami, Tallahassee, and Jackson, MS. Their Jackson office is dedicated to reforming Mississippi's broken schools and its abusive juvenile legal system. Through grassroots campaigns and litigation, SPLC targets school discipline policies that criminalize students. They have also done litigation on conditions of confinement for youth. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit SPLC's website and/or contact SPLC to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Alaska

Alaska provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Public Defender Agency, whose mandate includes juvenile delinquency cases.

[Public Defender Agency](#)

900 W. 5th Ave., Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 334-4400

The mission of the Public Defender Agency is to provide constitutionally mandated legal representation to indigent clients appointed by the court. The Civil Division handles Child in Need of Aid cases and represents minors in juvenile delinquency cases and individuals subject to civil commitment proceedings. The Agency has summer internship opportunities available for law students who have completed their second year of law school. Students are encouraged to visit the Agency's website and/or contact the Agency for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Arizona

Arizona provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes public defender offices and private appointed attorneys.

[Maricopa County Office of the Public Advocate](#)

Durango Juvenile Court
3131 W. Durango, 3rd Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85009
(602) 372-2815

The Maricopa County Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) protects the fundamental rights of youth, parents, and adults by providing effective legal representation for indigent people facing delinquency petitions, dependency/severance proceedings, and court evaluation and court-ordered mental health treatment, when appointed by the Maricopa County Superior Court. OPA provides legal representation for individuals who are not able to afford the services of private lawyers. OPA has internship/externship opportunities available for undergraduate students, graduate students, law students, and recent graduates. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the OPA's website and/or contact OPA for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Coconino Public Defender's Office Juvenile Division](#)

110 East Cherry Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
(928) 679-7700

Following appointment by the courts of Coconino County, the Coconino Public Defender's Office provides, pursuant to ethical and constitutional obligations, quality and cost-efficient legal representation to indigent persons who are: individuals facing criminal charges in adult court; youth accused of delinquency; parties involved in termination of parental rights litigation; parties to child dependency actions; and subjects of mental health commitment proceedings. The office has internship/externship opportunities available for undergraduate students, graduate students, law students, and recent graduates. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Yavapai County Public Defender Juvenile Division](#)

595 White Spar Road
Prescott, AZ 86303
(928) 771-3588

The Juvenile Division of the Yavapai County Public Defender represents and protects the rights of children (and/or parents) in both delinquency and dependency petitions in the Superior Court, when appointed by the court. The office has internship/externship opportunities available for students. Students are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Pima County Juvenile Criminal Defenders](#)

2231 East Ajo Way
Tucson, AZ 85713
(520) 724-2994

The Pima County Public Defender represents indigent individuals upon appointment by the courts in felony cases, juvenile delinquency matters, appeals, and extradition hearings under the jurisdiction of the Pima County Superior Court, Juvenile Court, or Arizona Appellate Courts. The mission of the office is to provide highly skilled and vigorous representation of indigent people charged with crimes in Pima County, by tirelessly defending and seeking to expand the constitutional rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Arizona State Constitution. The office has internship/externship opportunities available for law students and recent graduates. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Mohave County Legal Advocate's Office](#)

P.O. Box 7000
316 N. 5th Street, 1st Floor
Kingman, AZ 86402
(928) 753-0782

The Mohave County Legal Advocate's Office provides legal representation to indigent youth and adults, when appointed by the Mohave County Superior Court. Their attorneys provide legal representation to

youth facing delinquency petitions (criminal charges for minors), youth involved in dependency cases (child welfare abuse/neglect cases), adults facing criminal felony charges, and youth and adults in appellate cases. The office practices before both criminal and juvenile divisions of Mohave County Superior Court; Kingman, Bullhead City, and Lake Havasu City Justice Courts; Arizona Court of Appeals; and the Arizona Supreme Court. The office has internship/externship opportunities available for students. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Children's Action Alliance](#)

3030 N. 3rd St., Suite 760
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 266-0707

5049 E Broadway Blvd, Suite 158
Tucson, AZ 85711
(520) 329-4930

Through research, publications, media campaigns, and advocacy, the Children's Action Alliance (CAA) seeks to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Arizona children and their families on issues related to health, child abuse and neglect, early care and education, budget and taxes, youth justice, children and immigration, and working families. CAA works toward a future in which all children have health insurance, no child is raised in poverty and hunger, every child enters school ready to learn and succeed, no child endures abuse or neglect, every child has a place to call home, and struggling teens have the support they need to become responsible adults. Information about current employment opportunities is available on the website.

Arkansas

Arkansas provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Public Defender Commission that oversees indigent defense.

[Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families](#)

1400 West Markham, Suite 306
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 371-9678

The mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) is to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential. AACF serves as a voice for children at the Arkansas State Capitol and in Washington D.C. by gathering and analyzing data to support public policy that serves all children and families and organizing coalitions of diverse groups to drive change. Information about current employment opportunities is available on the website.

[Arkansas Public Defender Commission, Trial Public Defender Division](#)

20th Judicial District Office
1270 Bruce St.
Conway, AR 72034
(501) 450-4975

The Arkansas Public Defender Commission is an independent agency of the State of Arkansas that was created and exists to provide legal defense and services to persons who have been found to be financially indigent by a court and who are charged with offenses or accused of conduct which may result in loss of liberty in the event that the defendant is found guilty. The Public Defender also provides youth representation in cases involving allegations of delinquency and families in need of services. The Juvenile Ombudsman Division principally monitors and provides oversight of cases in which a youth has been adjudicated delinquent and committed to the Arkansas Department of Youth Services. Information about current employment opportunities is available on the website.

California

California provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system, which includes public defender offices, contract attorneys, and private appointed attorneys.

[Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice](#)

424 Guerrero Street, Suite A
San Francisco, CA 94110
(415) 621-5661

The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to reduce society's reliance on incarceration as a solution to social problems. In pursuit of this mission, CJCJ provides direct services, technical assistance, and policy analysis that work in unison to promote a balanced and humane criminal justice system designed to reduce incarceration and enhance long-term public safety. CJCJ has internship/externship opportunities available for students. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply.

[Children's Defense Fund—California](#)

634 S. Spring Street, Suite 500C
Los Angeles, CA 90014
(213) 355-8787

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Leave No Child Behind mission is to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. CDF aligns its work in order to provide viable opportunities for children and dismantle the cradle-to-prison pipeline. CDF develops innovative research, public policy, and best practices that empower lawmakers and communities to expand effective community-based alternatives to youth incarceration. They also work closely with systems leaders to ensure that youth in the state's juvenile facilities receive fair, positive, and developmentally appropriate treatment. CDF has

internship/externship opportunities for students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit CDF's website and/or contact CDF for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Law Offices of the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office—Juvenile Division](#)

210 West Temple Street, 19th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-2811

The Juvenile Division of the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office represents youth who cannot afford an attorney in 19 courtrooms in seven different courthouses throughout Los Angeles County. The office has a summer, fall, and spring law clerk program and hires entry-level attorneys. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details.

[Los Angeles County Alternate Public Defender](#)

210 West Temple St., Suite 18-709
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-6626

The County of Los Angeles Alternate Public Defender provides high-quality and caring legal representation to youth charged with crimes who cannot afford attorneys when the public defender is unable to represent them (due to a conflict of interest or unavailability) in court proceedings in the Superior Courts and in appeals to higher courts. The office has a summer, fall, and spring law clerk program, where students will be assigned to various branches throughout the county. Interested students are encouraged to visit the office's website and/or contact the office for more details.

[National Center for Youth Law](#)

1212 Broadway, Suite 600
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 835-8098

The National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) is a public interest law firm that uses the law to improve the lives of poor children nationwide. NCYL works to ensure that low-income children have the resources, support, and opportunities they need for a healthy and productive future. It does so by engaging in class action litigation, administrative and legislative advocacy, and other activities intended to benefit large numbers of low-income children and adolescents. NYCL also engages in a limited number of cases which benefit individual children. NYCL focuses its work on foster care, youth justice, adolescent health care, mental health, education, and governmental benefit programs. NCYL has internship/externship opportunities for law students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Students are encouraged to visit NCYL's website and/or contact NCYL for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[San Francisco Public Defender—Juvenile Unit](#)

555 7th Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 553-1671

The San Francisco Public Defender’s mission is to protect and defend the rights of indigent clients through effective, vigorous, compassionate, and creative legal advocacy. They strive to provide the highest level of legal advocacy for each of their clients and to be a nationwide model for the delivery of indigent defense services. Their Juvenile Unit is a national model for holistic representation and works to meet the legal and collateral needs of youth and their families. The office offers internship/externship opportunities to second- and third-year law students throughout the year. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the office’s website and/or contact the office for more details on how to apply.

[Youth Law Center](#)

832 Folsom Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 543-3379

The Youth Law Center (YLC) is a public interest law firm that works to protect children in the nation’s foster care and juvenile legal systems and to ensure that they receive the necessary support and services to become healthy and productive adults. YLC has internship/externship opportunities for law students throughout the academic year and during the summer. YLC has also hosted project-based postgraduate law fellows. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit YLC’s website and/or contact YLC for more details on how to apply.

Colorado

Colorado provides counsel to youth who cannot afford an attorney through the Office of the Colorado State Public Defender.

[Colorado Juvenile Defender Center](#)

675 N. Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 435-7232

The Colorado Juvenile Defender Center is a Denver-based organization that works with youth, families, and lawyers to advocate for the rights and treatment of children and youth in the juvenile legal system through direct representation, public advocacy, community organizing, nonpartisan research, and policy development. Information about current employment and internship opportunities is available on the website.

[Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel](#)

1300 N Broadway, Suite 330
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 515-6920

The mission of the Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel (OADC), through the practice of holistic public defense, is to help adults and children who the government has charged with criminal and delinquent offenses. The OADC's holistic practice model fosters ethical, informed, and standard-driven best practices in public defense. The OADC allocates resources in a manner intentionally designed to rebalance the disparate power wielded by the government in the criminal legal system. OADC advocates for every client's inherent worth and dignity by centering the client's experiences and voice to achieve the best legal outcome.

[Office of the Colorado State Public Defender](#)

1300 Broadway, Suite 400
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 764-1400

The mission of the Office of the Colorado State Public Defender is to defend and protect the rights, liberties, and dignity of those accused of crimes, including people under the age of 18 who cannot afford to retain counsel. They do so by providing constitutionally and statutorily mandated representation that is effective, zealous, inspired, and compassionate. The Office of the Colorado State Public Defender offers internship/externship opportunities in all 21 regional offices to law students, including several paid 2L summer internships. Interested students are encouraged to visit their website and/or contact the Office of the Colorado State Public Defender for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Connecticut

Connecticut provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Division of Public Defender Services overseen by a bipartisan commission, which appoints the public defender, sets compensation, and engages in policy making. The Division employs a staff of permanent juvenile defenders throughout the state and has a Juvenile Post-Conviction & Re-Entry unit that represents adjudicated juvenile clients who have been committed to the Department of Children and Families. The Division contracts with private attorneys who serve as "special public defenders" when the Division has a conflict of interest. The indigent defense system is entirely state-funded.

[Center for Children's Advocacy](#)

2074 Park Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 570-5327

211 State Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

(203) 335-0719

Center for Children’s Advocacy (CCA) is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the University of Connecticut School of Law whose mission is to promote and protect the legal rights and interests of poor children dependent upon the child welfare, health, mental health, education, and juvenile legal systems for their care. CCA employs a number of methods to achieve its purposes, including individual representation, class action advocacy, training, and administrative and legislative advocacy. Because of its recognition that interdisciplinary approaches contribute immensely to understanding children’s issues, CCA is committed to working in partnership with experts and policy analysts to develop appropriate solutions to meet the complex challenges of these interlocking systems. CCA has internship/externship opportunities for law and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit CCA’s website and/or contact CCA for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Connecticut Justice Alliance](#)

2470 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605
(203) 579-2727

The mission of the Connecticut Justice Alliance (CTJA) is to stop the criminalization of Connecticut’s youth. The organization’s goals are to bring about these outcomes: fewer children will enter the system, the justice system will treat all children fairly and effectively, and CTJA will be sustainable. CTJA accomplishes its mission by serving as a catalyst for systems reform and employs the following strategies in pursuit of its mission: legislative education and advocacy; strategic communications; community organizing; and national, state, and local partnerships.

[Connecticut Public Defender Services](#)

Please see website for contact information for each Juvenile Matters Office

Connecticut Public Defender Services represents children in delinquency matters throughout Connecticut at 11 Juvenile Matters offices, in Bridgeport, Hartford, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, Rockville, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury, and Willimantic. Connecticut Public Defender Services offers youth-specific legal internships in fall, spring, and summer. Interested students are encouraged to visit their website and/or contact the Connecticut Public Defender Services for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Delaware

Delaware provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide public defender that handles juvenile cases. Additional services are provided by appointed attorneys in cases of conflict.

[Office of Defense Services, Juvenile Defense Unit](#)

820 North French Street, 3rd Floor

Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 577-5200

The Office of Defense Services provides statewide representation of all youth charged with delinquency and criminal matters. Attorneys in the family court unit are assigned to these cases, and these attorneys also handle adult domestic violence matters that are prosecuted in family court. Attorneys in the unit are stationed in each county and are specially trained to represent youth. The office has a summer law clerk program and offers a few law clerk positions throughout the academic year. Interested students are encouraged to visit the office's website for information on how to apply.

[Delaware Center for Justice](#)

100 W. 10th St., Suite 905
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 658-7174

What began as a Prisoner's Aid Society in 1920 has evolved into an organization that currently serves both adults and youth who are justice-involved—transforming the delivery of justice in Delaware and implementing programs that facilitate fresh starts for victims of crime, youth at risk, and the incarcerated. The Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) is the leading nonprofit organization in Delaware committed to transforming the quality of justice through advocacy, policy, and practice. DCJ has a strong focus on youth justice. DCJ has internship/externship opportunities for students. Interested students are encouraged to visit DCJ's website and/or contact their office for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available opportunities.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia provides counsel to indigent youth through its Public Defender Service (PDS), which represents up to 60 percent of indigent people in D.C., including youth. The remaining people are represented by private attorneys drawn from a panel list prepared and maintained by PDS.

[Center for Children's Law and Policy](#)

1701 K Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 637-0377

The Center for Children's Law and Policy is currently focused on three main areas: eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile legal system, reducing the unnecessary and inappropriate incarceration of children, and eliminating dangerous and inhumane practices for youth in custody. Their staff members pursue a range of different activities to achieve these goals, including training, technical assistance, administrative and legislative advocacy, research, writing, media outreach, and public education. The Center for Children's Law and Policy welcomes applications for internships from law students and graduate students. They accept applications from students pursuing full-time placements of 10 weeks or more during the summer, as well as academic year internships and externships. Interested students are encouraged to visit the office's website for more details on how to apply.

[Coalition for Juvenile Justice](#)

1629 K St. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 827-9751

The Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ) is a nationwide coalition of State Advisory Groups (SAGs), organizations, individuals, youth, and allies dedicated to preventing children and youth from becoming involved in the courts and upholding the highest standards of care when youth are charged with wrongdoing and enter the legal system. CJJ envisions a nation where fewer children are at risk of delinquency; and if they are at risk or involved with the justice system, they and their families receive every possible opportunity to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives. The Coalition for Juvenile Justice has internship/externship opportunities available for law, undergraduate, and graduate students. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit the coalition's website and/or contact them for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[The Gault Center](#)

1800 M St. NW
FT1 Box #33604
(202) 452-0010

The Gault Center, formerly the National Juvenile Defender Center, was created to promote justice for all children by ensuring excellence in the defense of youth in delinquency proceedings. The Gault Center provides support to public defenders, appointed counsel, child advocates, law school clinical programs, and nonprofit law centers to ensure quality representation for youth in urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas. The Gault Center has developed national standards for the performance of youth defense attorneys; conducts assessments of states' youth defense delivery systems; and developed a 42-lesson, skills-based youth defense specialization training program. The Gault Center also provides training and technical assistance to thousands of youth defense attorneys and juvenile court players each year. The Gault Center is committed to promoting racial justice, eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, and advocating for overrepresented populations in juvenile court.

The Gault Center has internship/externship opportunities for law students and occasionally undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. The Gault Center hosts law graduates for its Gault Fellowship—an internally funded two-year youth defense postgraduate organizational fellowship. The Gault Center also seeks candidates to host for project-based postgraduate law fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the Gault Center's website and/or contact the Gault Center for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[National Juvenile Justice Network](#)

1200 G St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 878-6655

The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) leads a movement of state-based youth justice reform organizations to shrink youth justice systems and transform the remainder into systems that treat youth and families with dignity and humanity. NJJN's work is premised on the fundamental understanding that juvenile legal systems are inextricably bound with systemic and structural racism. As a part of this approach, NJJN purposefully looks to elevate and learn from those individuals and groups who are most negatively affected by justice systems policies and to analyze all reforms in light of the larger systemic barriers to justice. There are internship/externship opportunities at NJJN available for students, and NJJN also has a Youth Justice Leadership Institute fellowship. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit NJJN's website and/or contact the organization for more details on how to apply.

[Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, Community Defender Division](#)

1442 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 824-2801

As part of the Public Defender Service's (PDS) holistic approach to public defense, the Juvenile Services Program within the Community Defender Division provides legal representation and advocacy for children who have been committed to the Department of Youth Rehabilitation services. PDS has internship/externship opportunities for law students throughout the academic year and during the summer. PDS also hosts law graduates applying for project-based postgraduate fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit PDS's website and/or contact PDS for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Florida

Florida provides counsel to indigent youth through a circuit-based public defender system. Each of Florida's 20 judicial circuits has an elected public defender and provides trial-level representation. Five of the circuit public defender offices handle appeals in their regions.

[Law Offices of the Public Defender, Eleventh Judicial Circuit—Children's Defense Division](#)

1340 NW 14th Street
Miami, FL 33125
(305) 545-1600

The assistant public defenders in the Juvenile Division represent children under 18 years of age who are charged with committing a delinquent act. The division works to ensure that each child's rights are protected and that the government meets the child's needs in a system intended to be "child-centered." To that end, the assistant public defenders, disposition specialists, and investigators not only prepare the defense of the case, but also collaborate to identify and address each child's unique needs. In response to the large number of youth being transferred to adult court —over 1,000 each year—the Miami Dade Public Defender (MDPD) has established the Juvenile Sentencing Advocacy Project (JSAP) as part of its Anti-Violence Initiative. JSAP attempts to identify alternatives to sentencing children as adults and improve programming. MDPD has internship/externship opportunities for law, graduate, and

undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit MDPD's website and/or contact MDPD for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Georgia

Georgia primarily provides counsel to youth through a statewide public defender system, the Georgia Public Defender Council.

[Georgia Public Defender Council](#)

270 Washington Street, Suite 6079
Atlanta, GA 30334

The Georgia Public Defender Council (GPDC) oversees Georgia's indigent defense system for persons accused of crimes. The juvenile divisions of GPDC provide legal representation to youth accused of delinquency and status offenses in juvenile court. Representation commences at the preliminary hearing and continues through trials and appeals. The following counties/circuits have juvenile divisions: [Alcovy Judicial Circuit](#), [Chatham County](#), [DeKalb County](#), [Douglas County](#), [Fulton County](#), [Gilmer County](#), [Western Judicial Circuit](#), and [Wilkinson County](#). Students and graduates may contact the offices individually to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities (please see below) or can check GPDC's website for statewide internship postings.

Hawaii

Hawaii provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide public defender office governed by an appointed defender council.

[Hawaii Office of the Public Defender](#)

1130 North Nimitz Hwy, Suite A-254
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 586-2100

The Hawaii Office of the Public Defender aims to safeguard individual rights in all criminal and juvenile matters through all stages of the proceeding. The Office will provide legal services to any person who is financially unable to obtain a private attorney according to the indigency guidelines. Please see the website for employment opportunities.

Idaho

Idaho provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system, which includes public defenders—either through a county office, a joint office of more than one county, or a contract with an existing office—and contract attorneys.

[Ada County Public Defender's Office](#)

200 West Front Street, Suite 107

Boise, Idaho 83702

(208) 577-4930

Ada County Public Defender's Office provides legal representation to indigent youth accused of delinquency offenses in juvenile court. Representation may include arguing preliminary motions in court, conducting investigations, interviewing witnesses and clients, preparing cases for trial, negotiating disposition agreements, trying cases, and arguing post-trial motions. Students and graduates may contact the office to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Illinois

Illinois provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system. Counties with a population greater than 35,000 must establish a public defender office. Smaller counties may establish public defender offices alone or in conjunction with a county within the same judicial circuit.

[Law Offices of the Cook County Public Defender Juvenile Justice Division](#)

2245 West Ogden Ave.

Chicago, IL 60612

(312) 433-7046

The Juvenile Justice Division of the Cook County Public Defender (CCPD) represents youth accused of crimes ranging from first-degree murder to graffiti. By law, these clients are younger than 17 years old when their cases begin. Their lawyers also represent children in situations in which the State is seeking to have the case transferred to adult court. This division also assigns attorneys to three suburban locations where juvenile cases are heard once a week. Those suburbs are Skokie, Rolling Meadows, and Bridgeview. CCPD has internship/externship opportunities for law, graduate, and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit CCPD's website for more details on how to apply.

[Juvenile Justice Initiative](#)

518 Davis Street

Evanston, IL 60201

(847) 864-1567

The Juvenile Justice Initiative (JJI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan statewide advocacy organization working to transform the youth justice system in Illinois by reducing reliance on confinement, enhancing fairness for all youth, and developing a comprehensive continuum of community-based resources throughout the state. JJI has successfully advocated for numerous reforms in Illinois that have positively impacted children in conflict with the law. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit JJI's website and/or contact JJI to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Indiana

Indiana provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that is mostly locally funded. Larger counties are required to have an oversight public defender board and an appointed chief defender.

[DeKalb County Public Defender](#)

215 E Ninth Street
Auburn, IN 46706
(260) 925-1863

The DeKalb County Public Defender provides legal representation for DeKalb County individuals who cannot afford a lawyer in both criminal and juvenile matters. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Elkhart County Public Defender](#)

119 S. Third Street
Goshen, IN 46526
(574) 535-6736

The Elkhart County Public Defender provides legal representation to indigent individuals in Elkhart County facing felony or misdemeanor charges, juvenile adjudication, and mental health commitment. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Marion County Public Defender Agency](#)

151 N. Delaware St., Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 327-4100

The Marion County Public Defender Agency (MCPDA) provides legal representation for Marion County citizens who cannot afford to hire their own lawyer in matters involving liberty interests, including criminal cases. Their services are provided as a public service. MCPDA works on felony, misdemeanor, Title IV D, civil commitment, termination of parental rights, and juvenile court cases both at the trial and appellate levels. MCPDA has internship/externship opportunities for law and social work students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Juvenile Defense Project](#)

Indiana Public Defender Council
309 W. Washington Street, Suite 401
Indianapolis, IN 46240
(317) 232-2490

The Indiana Public Defender Council's Juvenile Defense Project works to assist youth defense services in Indiana's court system. They do this by advocating for youth defense as a specialized area of practice, training youth defenders, and by educating interested parties around the state. The Juvenile Defense Project also works to ensure that young people have access to counsel at all critical stages of a delinquency case, emphasizing the importance of early appointment at detention hearings and initial hearings; advocating for increased post-dispositional representation, including appellate and civil legal service advocacy; and promoting the collection of youth defense data to inform future opportunities. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Shelby County Indiana Public Defender Agency](#)

19 W. Hendricks St.
Shelbyville, IN 46176
(317) 421-8031

The Shelby County Public Defender Agency is responsible for the representation of indigent clients in all areas of Shelby County Courts, where a person is entitled to an attorney as a matter of law. Attorneys in Shelby County are contracted with the Public Defender Agency and accept felony cases, juvenile court delinquency and child in need of supervision cases, termination/paternity cases, and all felony criminal appeals. In addition, attorneys handle child support cases when incarceration is imminent. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Vanderburg County Public Defender Agency](#)

1 NW Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Civic Center Complex, Room 202
Evansville, IN 47708

The Vanderburg County Public Defender Agency has responsibility for representing indigent clients in Vanderburg County Courts. Attorneys with the Public Defender Agency are assigned to the circuit and superior felony divisions, misdemeanor court, juvenile court and all criminal appeals. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the agency's website for more details on how to apply.

[Youth Law T.E.A.M. of Indiana](#)

333 N. Pennsylvania Street, Suite 500
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 916-0786

The Youth Law T.E.A.M.'s goal is to influence positive systemic change in youth legal issues in the juvenile legal, education, and child welfare systems within Indiana by providing technical assistance, education and training, advocacy for best practices, and monitoring for compliance. Through a knowledgeable and trained core of youth service professionals, youth are afforded the rights and privileges provided in the United States Constitution, the Indiana Constitution, and the laws of the United States and the state of Indiana. Additionally, Youth Law T.E.A.M. provides youth with education on these laws and their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the United States and Indiana. Students and graduates may visit the

Youth Law T.E.A.M.'s website and contact the organization to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Iowa

Iowa provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Office of the State Public Defender that administers the delivery of and payment for indigent defense services.

[Office of the State Public Defender](#)

Lucas State Office Building, Fourth Floor
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 242-6158

The Office of the State Public Defender is responsible for coordinating Iowa's Indigent Defense System. Its mission is to ensure that all indigent persons in Iowa are provided high-quality legal representation in criminal, juvenile, and other eligible proceedings in the most efficient and fiscally responsible manner. The office is led by the State Public defender, who is appointed by the governor. The Des Moines, Sioux City, and Waterloo locations maintain dedicated juvenile offices. The Office of the State Public Defender also contracts with more than 1,000 private attorneys and several nonprofit organizations throughout Iowa to provide court-appointed representation in cases that public defender offices are unable to handle. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit the Office of the State Public Defender's website and to contact the office to learn about available opportunities.

Kansas

Kansas provides counsel to indigent youth at the county level. The Kansas State Board of Indigent Defense Services handles adult felony representation through several regional defender offices but does not administer youth indigent defense unless the youth is charged as an adult with a felony or is appealing from a decision to transfer the youth into adult court.

[Kansas Legal Services](#)

712 S. Kansas Avenue, Suite 200
Topeka, KS 66603
(785) 233-2068

Kansas Legal Services (KLS), a statewide nonprofit corporation, is dedicated to helping low-income Kansans meet their basic needs through the provision of important legal and mediation services. KLS handles cases in several areas of law, including delinquency matters in some counties. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit the KLS website and to contact the organization to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Kentucky

Kentucky provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Department of Public Advocacy (DPA) that operates indigent defense offices in all counties. Youth accused of status offenses and delinquent acts are entitled to be represented by the DPA.

[Children's Law Center, Inc.](#)

1002 Russell Street
Covington, KY 41011
(859) 431-3313

The Children's Law Center, Inc. (CLC KY) is a legal service center protecting the rights of children and youth to help them overcome barriers and transition into adulthood, better advocate for their needs, and successfully contribute to society. CLC KY provides individual legal advocacy to children and youth, and through public policy work, training and education, impact litigation, and youth defender support services, seeks to improve the systems that serve young people. CLC KY offers services in both Kentucky and Ohio and collaborates with other organizations within the region and nationally on a variety of topics. CLC KY's priority issues are around youth justice, children in need of protection, and education rights. CLC KY offers a limited number of summer internship and externship opportunities for law students. Students are encouraged to visit the CLC KY website to learn more and apply to available internship/externship opportunities.

[Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy](#)

5 Mill Creek Park
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 564-8006

The Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy's (DPA) mission is to provide high-quality, client-centered legal representation to indigent persons of all ages, accused of crimes or facing a deprivation of liberty throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Their fulfillment of this mission is essential to the defense and protection of fundamental constitutional rights and the preservation of a fair and just criminal system. DPA has juvenile units within its Trial and Post Trial Divisions. DPA has full-time law clerk positions for law students and law school graduates. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit DPA's website and/or contact DPA for more details on how to apply.

Louisiana

Louisiana provides counsel to indigent youth at the judicial district level. All youth are presumed to be indigent, and the court will either appoint counsel or refer the youth for representation by the district public defender. The Louisiana Public Defender Board, an oversight body, employs a deputy public defender, who is the director of Juvenile Defender Services.

[Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights](#)

1100-B Milton Street
New Orleans, LA 70122
(504) 658-6860

The Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights (LCCR) is a nonprofit, specialized youth defense law office. LCCR defends young people in New Orleans’ legal system through both direct representation and public advocacy. Their holistic defense helps young people achieve their legal and life goals. LCCR advocates and litigates for a transformed youth justice system that is fair, compassionate, and promotes positive youth development. Their leadership and partnerships strengthen communities and expand opportunities for all children. LCCR has internship/externship opportunities for law, graduate, and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. LCCR also seeks candidates to host for project-based postgraduate law fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit LCCR’s website and/or contact LCCR for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Maine

Maine provides counsel to indigent youth through a locally based process. The court appoints private attorneys who have submitted their names to the district court clerk to represent indigent youth. The indigent defense system is 100 percent state funded.

[Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services](#)

154 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333
(207) 287-3257

The Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services was established to provide high-quality representation to Maine citizens who are entitled to counsel at state expense under the United States Constitution or under the Constitution or statutes of Maine. The Commission uses assigned private attorneys and contract counsel to provide representation to individuals facing criminal charges in adult court; youth accused of delinquency, parents in child protective cases, and people facing involuntary commitment to a psychiatric hospital who are indigent. The Commission’s mission is to protect the rights of Maine’s indigent citizens in courts throughout the state by providing oversight, support, and training to assigned private counsel and to contract counsel.

Maryland

Maryland provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Maryland Office of the Public Defender. That office is established in the executive branch and comprised of a public defender, deputy public defenders, district public defenders, and a panel of private attorneys for conflict cases. The Office of the Public Defender provides juvenile services through 12 district offices and is comprised of nine divisions at the state level: Appellate, Parental Defense, Major Crimes and Complex Litigation, Post Conviction Defenders, Social Work, Forensics, Juvenile Protection, Mental Health, and Training.

[Maryland Office of the Public Defender](#)

6 Saint Paul Place, Suite 1400
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 767-8460

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) has at least one district office in each county and Baltimore City, some with youth defense opportunities. OPD offers hands-on experience for students to assist in the client-centered and team-based representation of OPD clients. OPD has internship and externship opportunities for law, graduate, and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. OPD has also hosted graduates for project-based, post-graduate law fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit OPD's website for more details on how to apply.

[Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Juvenile Litigation](#)

300 North Gay Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
(443) 263-6360

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Juvenile Litigation team is comprised of a group of lawyers, social workers, and staff members from the Maryland Office of the Public Defender in Baltimore City who have chosen to dedicate their careers to working with children in the juvenile court system. The Juvenile Litigation team believes that every child is deserving of zealous advocacy and fights each day to protect and defend clients and their due process rights. The Juvenile Litigation team's representation continues even when the court case ends, and they encourage their clients to stay in touch. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the Maryland Office of the Public Defender website for more details on how to apply.

[Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Juvenile Protection Division](#)

One South Calvert Plaza, 8th Floor
201 East Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 223-3783

In January 2007, the Public Defender created the Juvenile Protection Division (JPD) to serve as a specialized statewide division to monitor the conditions of confinement of all Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) youth clients committed to the care and custody of the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). JPD is also responsible for protecting the individual rights of youth who are committed to DJS facilities, ensuring the safety and appropriateness of their placements, and assuring the timely implementation of juvenile court orders. JPD is comprised of three attorneys, one social worker, and one paralegal who work collaboratively with trial attorneys representing individual youth to ensure the health and safety of youth who are detained. JPD's responsibility for this oversight and advocacy for committed youth are consistent with the mission of OPD and the legal services that are provided to adult

clients. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit JPD's website for more details on how to apply.

[Maryland Office of the Public Defender, Youthful Defendant Unit](#)

219 E. Redwood Street, Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 209-8680

The Youthful Defendant Unit (YDU) is a group of attorneys, social workers, and staff from the Maryland Office of the Public Defender who represent children charged as adults in Baltimore City. YDU works as a team to achieve the best possible results for their clients. YDU takes pride in zealously and comprehensively representing clients and recognizes that an important part of the work takes place outside the courtroom. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit YDU's website for more details on how to apply.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts provides counsel to indigent youth through the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS), the state public defender agency for Massachusetts. In 1992, the Youth Advocacy Division (formerly the Youth Advocacy Project) was established within CPCS to provide defender services to youth. In addition to CPCS staff attorneys, YAD includes several hundred private attorneys with whom CPCS contracts, trains, and certifies to accept delinquency cases.

[Children's Law Center of Massachusetts](#)

PO Box 710
2 State Street, 2nd Floor
Lynn, MA 01903
(781) 581-1977

The Children's Law Center of Massachusetts (CLCM) is a private, nonprofit legal services agency that provides direct representation and appellate advocacy for indigent children in juvenile legal, child welfare, and education matters. The mission of the CLCM is to promote and secure equal justice and to maximize opportunity for low-income children and youth by providing quality advocacy and legal services. CLCM has internship/externship opportunities for law students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit CLCM's website and/or contact CLCM for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Youth Advocacy Division, Committee for Public Counsel Services](#)

75 Federal Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 482-6212

The Youth Advocacy Division (YAD) ensures that every child from an indigent family in Massachusetts has access to zealous legal representation that incorporates a youth development approach, resulting in fair treatment in court. YAD works with each client to achieve both legal and life success. Accordingly, YAD provides leadership, training, support, and oversight to a diverse and collaborative youth defense bar across the state. Through individual representation and systemic advocacy, YAD partners with other state agencies, as well as community organizations and local agencies, to work toward creating safer and healthier communities. YAD has internship/externship opportunities throughout the state for law students and graduate social work students during the academic year and summer. Interested students and graduates may visit YAD's website for more details on how to apply.

Michigan

Michigan provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes public defenders, contracts with private attorneys, assigned counsel, and a combination of assigned counsel and public defenders. The system is funded entirely by individual counties, and the counties choose how attorneys are appointed for people who are indigent and system-involved.

[Washtenaw County Public Defender](#)

220 E Huron Street, Fifth Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 222-6970

The Washtenaw County Office of Public Defender was established to provide mandated legal defense representation for indigent and partially indigent persons in criminal, civil contempt, and juvenile delinquency matters, while serving as counterpart to state, county, city, village, and township prosecutors throughout all courts in the county. The Office seeks to create a community-oriented, client-centered law practice where every client receives high-quality and zealous representation along with access to community resources and opportunities without regard to economic or social status.

Minnesota

Minnesota provides counsel to indigent youth through full-time public defender offices in each of the state's judicial districts. The public defender offices are coordinated and funded by the State Board of Public Defense, which is a judicial branch agency.

[Hennepin County Public Defender](#)

701 4th Ave. S. Suite 1400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(612) 348-7530

Hennepin County Public Defender (HCPD) represents adults and youth accused of criminal offenses. HCPD advises their clients, empowers them to make decisions, and advocates on their behalf in court. Each client will have access to a team of professionals, including lawyers, investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, administrative assistants, and law clerks, all of whom will work together to

provide excellent client-centered representation. HCPD hosts summer law clerks, and interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit HCPD's website for more details on how to apply.

[Legal Rights Center](#)

1611 Park Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 337-0030

The Legal Rights Center (LRC) is a community-driven nonprofit law firm specializing in adult and youth defense and restorative justice practices and advocacy. LRC runs two programs: the Community Defense Program and the Youth: Education, Advocacy & Restorative Services Program. While each program has distinct goals and methods, collectively they point to the overall vision of improving the experience of the legal system for communities of color, if not proactively solving problems that prevent involvement in the legal system in the first place. LRC has internship/externship opportunities for law students throughout the academic year and during the summer. LRC also hosts volunteer attorneys who are looking to gain experience in youth defense practice. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit LRC's website and/or contact LRC for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Mississippi

Mississippi provides counsel to indigent youth through a county- or circuit-based system that is mostly locally funded. In some counties, youth are represented by court-appointed attorneys selected from a list of recommendations by the county or regional bar association. In counties or judicial circuits where the board of supervisors determines there are enough indigent individuals facing criminal charges to support the establishment of a public defender office, youth are represented by a public defender.

[Office of State Public Defender](#)

239 North Lamar, Suite 601
Jackson, MS 39201
(601) 576-4290

The Office of State Public Defender was established in 2011 to continue the work of Capital Defense (est. 2001), Appeals (est. 2007), and Training (est. 2008) under one umbrella and to develop proposals for a statewide public defense system. In 2016, parent defense in youth court protection matters was added to their responsibilities.

Missouri

Missouri provides counsel to indigent youth through the statewide Missouri State Public Defender System, a judicial branch agency with trial, appellate and capital divisions, and district offices throughout Missouri. Defenders can be either staff attorneys in the state defender system or assigned attorneys serving on a case-by-case basis.

[Missouri State Public Defender System](#)

Woodrail Centre
1000 West Nifong, Building 7, Suite 100
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 777-9977

Children's Defense Team (St. Louis)
1010 Market Street
Suite 1340
Saint Louis, MO 63101
(314)584-1200

Children's Defense Team (Kansas City)
215 W. Pershing Rd., Suite 410
Kansas City, MO
(816)255-1212

The Missouri State Public Defender System (MSPD) provides legal representation to all indigent citizens accused of or convicted of crimes in Missouri at the levels of the state trial court, appellate court, Missouri Supreme Court, and United States Supreme Court. Within MSPD, the Children's Defense Teams in St. Louis and Kansas City specialize in youth representation in specific counties throughout the state. MSPD has internship/externship opportunities for law students and occasionally undergraduate students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit MSPD's website and/or contact MSPD for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Montana

Montana provides counsel to indigent youth through the regional offices of the Office of the State Public Defender. The director of the Public Defender Advisory Commission coordinates a conflicts office.

[Office of the State Public Defender Central Office](#)

44 W. Park
Butte, MT 59701
(406) 496-6080

207 North Broadway CO-15
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 247-4857

The primary mission of the statewide public defender system is to provide effective professional legal services with equal access to quality client-centered representation. As trained legal professionals they strive to represent their clients in an effective and efficient manner to ensure a more fair and balanced justice system. They are dedicated and committed to improving overall outcomes for their clients and

addressing the conditions that led to their involvement with the justice system. The Office of State Public Defender has four divisions with over 20 offices statewide dedicated to providing zealous and effective legal services with a focus on quality client-centered representation. Students and graduates are encouraged to contact the office and/or visit their website to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Nebraska

Nebraska provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes elected public defenders, contract public defenders, and assigned counsel. Counties with populations in excess of 100,000 are required to have elected public defenders. Counties with populations below 35,000 may choose to have appointed public defenders.

[Douglas County Public Defender](#)

1717 Harney Street Room 500
Omaha, NE 68183
(402) 444-6192

The Douglas County Public Defender's Office is responsible for representing individuals whom the court has determined cannot afford to hire an attorney and who are involved in a variety of legal matters. They represent all indigent persons who are charged with a felony or misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment. In addition to these statutory duties, the Douglas County Public Defender's Office also represents parents and youth in the Douglas County Juvenile Court and individuals appearing before a Child Support Referee on a child support or paternity action. Students and graduates are encouraged to contact the office and/or visit their website to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Lancaster County Public Defender](#)

Courthouse Plaza
633 S. 9th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 441-7631

The mission of the Lancaster County Public Defender's Office is to provide high-quality legal services for people who are indigent and to advocate zealously on behalf of each individual client. Students and graduates are encouraged to contact the office and/or visit their website to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Nebraska Youth Advocates](#)

University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Center on Children, Families, and the Law
206 S. 13th St., Suite 1000
Lincoln, NE 68588
(402) 472-3479

Nebraska Youth Advocates serves as a resource center for youth defense attorneys in Nebraska, promoting best practices in the juvenile legal system. Project activities include training, technical assistance, legislative advocacy, and resource development. Project goals are to improve youth defense skills and practice in both direct court/legal activities and the attorney-client relationship. Procedural justice, fair and respectful treatment in the attorney-client relationship, is a guiding framework for the project.

Nevada

In Nevada, counties with a population over 100,000 are required to have public defender offices. Counties with a population under 100,000 may choose to establish a public defender office. County public defender offices are county-funded. Clark, Washoe, and Elko counties all established county public defender offices. In addition to county offices, there is also a state public defender. County public defenders and the state public defender are required to represent youth accused of delinquency. In counties with a public defender office, when the public defender has a conflict or otherwise cannot represent a youth, the state public defender may be appointed.

[Clark County Public Defender's Office](#)

309 S Third Street
Las Vegas, NV 89155
(702) 455-4685

Juvenile Division
601 N. Pecos
Las Vegas, NV 89101
(702) 455- 6836

The Office of the Clark County Public Defender provides zealous representation for clients accused of crimes. The office recognizes youth defense as a specialty. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to contact the Clark County Public Defender's Office for details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

[Washoe County Public Defender's Office](#)

1001 E. Ninth Street
Reno, NV 89512
(775) 328-2003

The mission of the Washoe County Public Defender's Office is to protect and defend the rights of indigent people in Washoe County by providing them access to justice through professional legal representation. The office recognizes youth defense as a specialty area and offers internships/externships for current law students under court rules allowing student attorneys to practice under supervision. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit Washoe County Public Defender Office's website or contact the office for details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

[Elko County Public Defender's Office](#)

571 Idaho Street
Elko, Nevada 89801
(775)738-2521

The Elko County Public Defender's Office represents people who have been accused of committing crimes and juvenile offenses in Elko County and cannot afford representation. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to contact the Elko County Public Defender's Office for details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire provides counsel to indigent youth in delinquency proceedings through the New Hampshire Public Defender, a private nonprofit that has been funded by the state to provide primary indigent defense services since 1972. Appellate representation is provided by the New Hampshire Public Defender in conjunction with the University of New Hampshire School of Law, the state's only accredited law school.

[New Hampshire Public Defender](#)

10 Ferry Street
Concord, NH 03301
(800) 464-0652

New Hampshire Public Defender (NHPD) serves clients facing criminal and delinquency prosecution who cannot afford to retain private counsel. NHPD has internship/externship opportunities for law students and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit NHPD's website for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

New Jersey

New Jersey provides counsel to indigent youth through regional public defender offices coordinated and directed by a statewide Office of the Public Defender. The public defender represents youth who are charged as delinquent or as youth in need of supervision in cases where the judge believes the proceeding could result in institutional commitment of the child. The state public defender office manages a pool of private attorneys who can be appointed when the public defender has a conflict. The state office also has an Office of Juvenile Defense Services that oversees planning, policy, and training for juvenile delinquency cases. Indigent defense is entirely state-funded.

[Advocates for the Children of New Jersey](#)

35 Halsey Street
Newark, NJ 07102
(973) 643-3876

The Advocates for the Children of New Jersey's (ACNJ) mission is to identify children's needs through research, policy, and legal analysis; to raise awareness of those needs through strategic communications; and to work with elected officials and other decision-makers to enact effective responses. ACNJ's goal is to help all children grow up safe, healthy, and educated, so they can become productive adults, contributing to New Jersey's communities, securing our future, and making the state a better place to live. ACNJ focuses on youth justice through its Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit ACNJ's website and/or contact ACNJ to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[New Jersey State Office of the Public Defender, Office of Juvenile Defense Services](#)

25 Market Street
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 292-7087

The New Jersey State Office of the Public Defender (NJSOPD) is committed to providing first-class legal representation to citizens who cannot afford attorneys at both the trial and appellate levels. The Office of Juvenile Defense Services (OJDS) specializes in youth defense, and its director leads a variety of initiatives such as developing specialized training for public defender attorneys who represent youth clients; disseminating information on relevant developing case law, resources, and research; and creating opportunities for youth defenders to exchange information and ideas. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit NJSOPD and OJDS's websites, and/or to contact NJSOPD and OJDS for details on how to apply or to learn about available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

New Mexico

New Mexico provides counsel to indigent youth through a state-funded Public Defender Department that provides trial-level representation through district offices located around the state. The public defender represents children accused of delinquent acts that carry a possible sentence of incarceration. Representation includes appeals and post-conviction proceedings.

[Law Offices of the Public Defender, Juvenile Unit](#)

505 Marquette NW, Suite 120
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 835-1526

The Law Offices of the Public Defender (LOPD) strives for the pursuit of justice and the protection of our constitutional rights. Its mission is to provide exemplary, caring, and professional legal services to people charged with crimes in New Mexico. They stand for equal access to quality legal representation for all which improves their lives, reduces recidivism, and makes the community safer. The 2nd Judicial District office in Albuquerque has a dedicated Juvenile Unit, though all district offices represent youth accused of crimes. LOPD offers internships and externships for law students in fall, spring, and summer. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit LOPD's website, and/or to contact LOPD for details on how to apply or to learn about available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

New York

In New York, all youth in delinquency proceedings are entitled to defense counsel at the state's expense. Court-appointed counsel may be provided through a legal aid society, contract attorney system, or panel system.

[Center for Family Representation, Youth Defense Practice](#)

40 Worth Street, Suite 605
New York, NY 10013
(212) 691-0950

The Center for Family Representation's (CFR) Youth Defense Practice represents young people facing delinquency proceedings in Queens and Manhattan. CFR utilizes an interdisciplinary youth defense team to advocate for youth who have been arrested and to keep them at home, in school, and out of prison. CFR offers internships and externships for law students and posts open staff attorney positions on their website. Please refer to their website for further information.

[Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Practice](#)

Offices in all five boroughs

111 Livingston Street, 8th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 237-3100

900 Sheridan Avenue, Room 6-C12
Bronx, NY 10451
(718) 579-7900

60 Lafayette Street, Room 9A
New York, NY 10013
(212) 312-2260

153-01 Jamaica Avenue, 3rd Floor
Jamaica, NY 11432
(718) 298-8900

60 Bay Street, 3rd Floor
Staten Island, NY 10301
(347) 422-5333

The Juvenile Rights Practice (JRP) represents 90 percent of the children who appear before family court in New York City on child protective, termination of parental rights, PINS (person in need of supervision), and juvenile delinquency petitions.

The role of Juvenile Rights attorneys is to provide legal representation, express clients' wishes to the court, and safeguard the interests and legal rights of young people in family court. They are assigned by the family court judge and remain active through the original case and any supplemental proceedings, which frequently take place over a period of years.

To enhance the quality and expand the scope of its advocacy, the practice has developed several specialized units. The Juvenile Services Unit is comprised of social workers with the intention of teaming social workers with lawyers to adequately address the educational, social, and psychological issues that arise in family court proceedings. The Kathryn A. McDonald Education Advocacy Project provides specialized legal and social work assistance in domestic violence cases and those requiring educational advocacy. The Appeals Unit, which represents clients throughout the appeals process, has shaped the law that governs juvenile court proceedings in New York. The Special Litigation Unit has initiated class action lawsuits and other litigation aimed at system-wide abuses within the juvenile legal, child welfare, and educational systems. JRP has internship/externship opportunities for law, graduate, and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. JRP also seeks candidates to apply for project-based postgraduate law fellowships and recruits annually for entry-level positions. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit JRP's website and/or contact JRP for more details on how to apply.

[Youth Represent](#)

11 Park Place, Suite 1512
New York, NY 10007
(646) 759-8080

Youth Represent (YR) is a youth defense and advocacy nonprofit organization. YR's mission is to ensure that young people affected by the criminal or juvenile legal system are afforded every opportunity to reclaim lives of dignity, self-fulfillment, and engagement in their communities. YR provides comprehensive legal representation, community support, education, and policy advocacy. YR has internship/externship opportunities for law students and hosts candidates for project-based postgraduate law fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit YR's website and/or contact YR for details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[North Carolina](#)

North Carolina provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-operated, state-funded system overseen by the Office of Indigent Defense Services (IDS). IDS and its oversight commission determine the methods of and standards for public defense delivery throughout North Carolina. Dependent on review and certification by the IDS, counties may deliver services through contract attorneys, panel systems, or public defender offices that provide representation or manage panel attorneys. IDS includes a dedicated Office of the Juvenile Defender that trains and supports juvenile defenders and promotes favorable policy change.

[Council for Children's Rights](#)

601 East Fifth Street, Suite 510
Charlotte, NC 28202
(704) 372-7961

The Council for Children's Rights (CCR) is comprised of 30 highly trusted attorneys, advocates, and professional staff who are dedicated to serving children and connecting them to vital services. CCR serves children in every major child-serving system, including those with histories of abuse and neglect, special education issues, and mental and physical health issues. These children are involved in custody disputes, come from homes with domestic violence, and/or become involved with the juvenile legal system. The systems charged with serving them are complex, overburdened, and unresponsive. CCR has a Children's Defense Team that serves as court-appointed attorneys for children ages 6-16 involved in delinquency court. Students and graduates may visit CCR's website and contact CCR to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[North Carolina Office of the Juvenile Defender](#)

PO Box 2448
Raleigh, NC 27602
(919) 890-1650

The Office of the Juvenile Defender's (OJD) mission is to provide services and support to youth defense attorneys. In conjunction with the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Government, OJD organizes and presents numerous statewide, regional, and local trainings. OJD has worked with the UNC School of Government to develop a practical manual for youth defense counsel and maintains a clearinghouse of juvenile delinquency-related material. OJD assists attorneys by answering questions, brainstorming issues, or providing ongoing consultation for cases pending in delinquency or adult trial court or on appeal. Additionally, a juvenile defender listserv has been created to allow youth defense counsel to discuss case problems, systemic issues, and other relevant topics quickly and efficiently.

[North Dakota](#)

North Dakota provides counsel to indigent youth through a state-funded system overseen by the Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents (CLCI). North Dakota has seven full-time public defender offices responsible for representing indigent adults and youth. In geographic areas where there is no public defender office or where there are conflicts, indigent legal services are provided by private attorneys who contract with CLCI.

[North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents](#)

2517 West Main Street
Valley City, ND 58072
(701) 845-8632

The North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents' mission is to provide high-quality, professional, and effective legal representation to eligible clients, consistent with the guarantees of the

Constitutions of the United States and North Dakota and applicable North Dakota statutes and rules at reasonable cost to the community. The commission itself does not provide legal advice or directly represent clients in legal proceedings. Representation is provided through the attorneys in public defender offices and through various contracted counsel. North Dakota presently has eight full-time public defender offices. They are located in Dickinson, Minot, Williston, Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Fargo, and Bismarck. Each public defender office is a separate firm that handles cases independently from the other public defender offices and contracted counsel.

Ohio

Ohio provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes local public defender offices, nonprofit corporations, private appointed attorneys, and contracts with the Office of the Ohio Public Defender. County Boards of Commissioners determine which type of indigent defense services will be provided in counties. Counties that meet certain indigent defense standards are eligible for state funding from the Ohio Public Defender. The state public defender has a Youth Defense Department that provides legal representation and services primarily post-disposition for youth who have been committed to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, as well as representation to youth who have been “bound over” to be tried as an adult, convicted, and sentenced to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. The state public defender is overseen by the Ohio Public Defender Commission.

[Office of the Ohio Public Defender, Youth Defense Department](#)

250 East Broad Street, Suite 1400
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 466-5394

The Ohio Public Defender (OPD) Youth Defense Department is a leader in effective advocacy for children in Ohio’s legal system. The Youth Defense Department is a team of talented professionals focused primarily on post-disposition advocacy and ensuring that the constitutional rights of children are fully realized and protected. The department steadily works toward a holistic approach to helping youth in the legal system and believes that the value of their advocacy extends beyond a youth’s duration of confinement. The department strives to remain at the forefront of the struggle for systemic improvement in youth justice through statewide and national collaboration and involvement in policy, education, professional development, and reform initiatives. The department’s commitment to these efforts protects youths’ right to be represented by counsel, raises the quality of representation, and promotes the just and humane treatment of children in the legal system. The department has volunteer opportunities for law, graduate, and undergraduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the department’s website and contact OPD for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma provides counsel to indigent youth through a combination of county and state public defender offices and private appointed attorneys. Counties with populations in excess of 300,000—such as the

counties containing the metropolitan areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City—must establish and fund public defender offices. All other counties are served by Oklahoma’s Indigent Defense System (OIDS), which provides representation through its satellite trial offices or through agreements with private attorney. OIDS represents youth in juvenile delinquency cases and appeals.

[Oklahoma County Public Defender’s Office—Juvenile Division](#)

5905 N. Classen Court, Suite 204
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
(405) 713-6770

The Juvenile Division of the Oklahoma County Public Defender’s Office (OCPDO) is responsible for representing youth under the age of 18. The office represents indigent youth clients in delinquency and child welfare proceedings. Students and graduates may contact OCPDO’s Juvenile Division to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Oregon

Oregon provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide Office of Public Defender Services (OPDS) that administers the delivery of and payment for indigent defense services. OPDS, governed by the Public Defense Services Commission, provides representation in juvenile delinquency cases by setting qualification standards and awarding contracts to private attorneys who may be individuals or members of law firms, nonprofit defender offices, and other groups. OPDS provides some appellate representation in adult cases but does not handle appeals from juvenile delinquency cases.

[Youth, Rights & Justice](#)

1785 NE Sandy Blvd, Suite 300
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 232-2540

Youth, Rights & Justice’s (YRJ) mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families through legal representation and advocacy in the courts, legislature, schools, and community. YRJ serves children and youth—primarily those in foster care—who are abused, neglected, or in trouble; students who face challenges at school; and parents who need help keeping their families intact. YRJ attorneys are also court-appointed to represent children involved in the juvenile legal system. Their SchoolWorks program serves children and youth who are involved in the juvenile court system and advocates for their educational rights and needs. YRJ advocates for policies to improve the lives of children and families throughout Oregon by drafting and advocating for legislation in Salem; influencing Oregon Administrative Rules created by the Department of Human Services and other state agencies; and disseminating research and other information to other attorneys and advocates for children, youth, and families around the state. YRJ has internship/externship opportunities for law students during the summer and school year. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit YRJ’s website for more details on how to apply.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania provides counsel to indigent youth through county public defenders. Each county, except Philadelphia, is statutorily required to appoint a public defender and the public defenders are responsible for representing youth in delinquency matters unless there is a conflict of interest. The Public Defender Act is interpreted as requiring counties (except Philadelphia County) to pay for the cost of public defenders. Counties must also pay for the appointment of conflict defenders when needed.

[Defender Association of Philadelphia](#)

1441 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 568-3190

The Defender Association of Philadelphia (DAP) represents approximately 70 percent of all persons arrested in Philadelphia. Assistant defenders rotate their assignments through the various units or divisions within the office. The Children & Youth Justice Unit provides youth representation at every phase of the juvenile legal process. DAP also maintains a Juvenile Life Without Parole (LWOP) practice to provide representation and reentry services to clients sentenced to LWOP as youth and a Juvenile Special Defense Division to represent youth charged as adults. DAP has summer internship opportunities for law students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the organization's website and/or contact the organization for more details on how to apply and to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Juvenile Law Center](#)

1800 JFK Blvd, Suite #1900B
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 625-0551

Juvenile Law Center (JLC) is the oldest nonprofit, public interest law firm for children in the United States. Founded in 1975 by four new graduates of Temple Law School in Philadelphia, JLC has become a national advocate for children's rights, working across the country to enforce and promote the rights and well-being of children who come into contact with the juvenile legal, child welfare, and other public systems. JLC has internship/externship opportunities for law and graduate students throughout the academic year and during the summer. JLC occasionally has internship opportunities available for undergraduate students. JLC seeks law graduates for its Zubrow Fellowship—an internally funded two-year postgraduate organizational fellowship. JLC also seeks candidates to host for project-based postgraduate law fellowships. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit JLC's website and/or contact JLC for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project](#)

1528 Walnut Street, Suite 515
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(267) 703-8046

The Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) uses direct service and policy advocacy to transform the experiences of children prosecuted in the adult criminal legal system and to ensure fair and thoughtful resentencing and reentry for individuals who were sentenced to life without parole as children. YSRP partners with court-involved youth and individuals, their families, and lawyers to develop holistic, humanizing narratives that mitigate the facts of each case; gets cases transferred to the juvenile system or resentenced; and makes crucial connections to community resources providing education, health care, housing, and employment. YSRP also provides trainings on mitigation and recruits, trains, and supervises students and other volunteers to assist in this work. YSRP's ultimate goals are to keep children out of adult jails and prisons and to enhance the quality of representation at resentencing hearings on behalf of individuals who were sentenced to life without parole as children. YSRP hosts fellows through Stoneleigh's Emerging Leader Fellows Program. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit YSRP's website and/or contact YSRP for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide public defense system. The juvenile division of the Rhode Island Office of the Public Defender represents youth in delinquency and wayward proceedings. The system is entirely funded by the state. Conflict representation is handled by private attorneys appointed directly by the trial judge and funded by the state.

[Rhode Island Public Defender, Juvenile Trial Division](#)

160 Pine Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-3492

The Rhode Island Public Defender's (RIPD) goal is to provide client-centered advice, holistic representation, and zealous advocacy with support from their team of advocates, social workers, investigators, interpreters, and other staff. Their commitment is to treat their clients with dignity, compassion, and fairness. RIPD is a firm of lawyers who defend adults and youth accused of committing crimes and represent parents who are threatened with loss of custody of their children because of neglect or abuse allegations. Supported by professional social workers, investigators, and interpreters, they represent clients in state court proceedings from the first appearance before a judge through trial or hearing, as well as through appeal if necessary. RIPD has internship/externship opportunities for undergraduate, law, and graduate students during the school year and summer. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the organization's website and/or contact the organization for more details on how to apply and to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

South Carolina

South Carolina's public defender system is a county-based system. The counties are grouped and divided among 16 judicial circuits within the state. Each judicial circuit has a circuit public defender who is responsible for the administration of public defender services in each of the counties within the circuit.

Circuit public defenders are appointed to the position for four-year terms by the South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense upon nomination to the position by a selection panel, consisting of attorneys representing each of the counties within the circuit.

[Richland County Public Defender](#)

Judicial Center
1701 Main Street, Suite 103
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 765-2592

[Charleston County Public Defender](#)

O.T. Wallace County Office Building 101 Meeting Street, 5th Floor
Charleston, SC 29401
(843) 958-1850

[13th Circuit Public Defender Office](#)

350 Halton Rd, Suite 300
Greenville, SC 29607
(864) 467-8522

The Richland County, Charleston County, and 13th Circuit Public Defender Offices have attorneys who specialize in representing youth. Interested students and graduates may contact these offices directly to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Children's Law Center](#)

1300 Pickens St.
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-1646

The Children's Law Center (CLC) is a resource center for South Carolina professionals involved in child maltreatment or juvenile court proceedings and child advocates working to improve the safety and well-being of children. The mission of the CLC is to advance children's law by strengthening public policy, increasing knowledge, and improving practice. CLC has internship/externship opportunities for MSW and law students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the organization's website and/or contact the organization for more details on how to apply and to learn more about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[South Dakota](#)

South Dakota provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that can include a public defender, contract attorneys, or privately appointed counsel. If the county or municipality elects to have an office of a public defender, the public defender must represent any indigent youth arrested or detained for juvenile delinquency. In South Dakota, only Lawrence, Pennington, and Minnehaha counties have a public defender office. The other 63 counties use private contract attorneys for indigent defense.

[Lawrence County Public Defender's Office](#)

90 Sherman St
Deadwood, SD 57732
(605) 578-3000

The Lawrence County Public Defender's Office represents adults and youth who have limited financial resources and are entitled by law to be represented by an attorney in the proceeding in which they are involved. In order to be eligible for their services, individuals must apply for an attorney in court, and the judge must make a determination that they are entitled to court-appointed counsel. The office strives to provide excellent legal representation to every client, with dignity, pride and integrity.

[Law Office of the Pennington County Public Defender](#)

130 Kansas City St., Suite 310
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 394-2181

The Law Office of the Pennington County Public Defender is appointed by the courts of Pennington County to represent all indigent persons who by law are entitled to be represented by an attorney in the proceeding in which they are involved. The attorneys in the Public Defender's Office primarily represent adults and youth charged with crimes. The office also represents persons for mental and alcohol commitments, other juvenile court proceedings, and appeals and post-conviction proceedings.

[Minnehaha County Public Defender's Office](#)

413 N. Main Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 367-4242

The Minnehaha County Public Defender's Office strives to provide exceptional legal representation and social advocacy to those who have limited access to resources. The office is mindful that each client's dignity, pride, and integrity are all equal components to vigorously defending one's individual rights.

Tennessee

Tennessee provides counsel to indigent youth through district public defender offices established in each judicial district. Public defenders have the responsibility of representing indigent persons at trial and appellate levels. The office of the executive director of the district public defenders conference coordinates defense efforts of the various district public defenders.

[Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office](#)

1101 Liberty Street
Knoxville, TN 37919
(865) 594-6120

The Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office (CLO) was created by the State of Tennessee in response to Gideon's constitutional mandate to provide representation to poor people accused of crimes. CLO emphasizes a client-centered, holistic approach that reflects their commitment to offering meaningful and dignified assistance to their clients and to help them get out, and stay out, of the criminal legal system. CLO also has a juvenile defense practice, providing specialized, passionate advocacy to children. They offer internships to law students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit CLO's website and/or contact CLO to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Law Office of the Shelby County Public Defender](#)

201 Poplar Avenue, Suite 2-01
Memphis, TN 38103
(901) 222-2800

The Law Office of the Shelby County Public Defender is the third-oldest public defender office in the country. They are dedicated to protecting the rights of those who cannot afford a lawyer to represent them in the courtroom. The Juvenile Court Team handles delinquency cases in Shelby County Juvenile Court, and the Juvenile Transfer Team handles cases where the child is tried as an adult in adult court. They offer internship/externship opportunities for undergraduate and law students during the spring, summer, and fall. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit the Law Office of the Shelby County Public Defender's website and/or contact them to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

Texas

Texas provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes contract attorneys, assigned panel attorneys, and public defender offices. The Texas Indigent Defense Commission was established by statute and provides funding to counties that meet the commission's standards for indigent defense, which are ratified by the Texas Judicial Counsel.

[Dallas County Public Defender's Office, Juvenile Division](#)

2600 Lone Star Drive, Suite A-132, LB 2
Dallas, TX 75212
(214) 698-4400

[El Paso County Public Defender's Office, Juvenile Unit](#)

6400 Delta Drive
El Paso, TX 79905
(915) 849-2625

[Harris County Public Defender's Office](#)

1310 Prairie Street
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 274-6700

These county public defender offices have internships for law students, and they sometimes have openings for full-time positions, though the Harris County office does not take recent graduates. Students and graduates may contact these offices for details on how to apply and learn about available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

[Lone Star Justice Alliance](#)

3809 South 1st Street
Austin, Texas 78704
(512) 394-5791

Lone Star Justice Alliance (LSJA) is a nonprofit legal organization that improves the lives of youth and emerging adults in the justice system. LSJA envisions a legal system that uses developmentally appropriate responses to behavior and treats youth and emerging adults with equity and dignity to promote resilience, conserve costs, and increase public safety. The Juvenile Sentencing Program advocates for rights, dignity, equity, and opportunity for youth in the juvenile and criminal legal systems through strategic and direct litigation, targeted public outreach and awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy. Through this program, LSJA seeks to eliminate extremely lengthy sentences for youth, focusing especially on juvenile life without parole. See LSJA's website for information on undergraduate, graduate, and law student internships.

Utah

Utah provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-funded system that includes legal defender's offices, contract attorneys, or interlocal cooperation agreements.

[Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys](#)

8 East 300 South, Suite 500
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
(801) 521-5225

Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys is a private law firm which contracts with Salt Lake County to provide indigent defense services to youth within that jurisdiction. It is the only dedicated youth public defender office in the state. Students and graduates are encouraged to contact Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys to learn about available academic or postgraduate opportunities.

Vermont

Vermont provides counsel to indigent youth alleged to be delinquent or children in need of care and supervision through a state-funded system of public defender offices, contract attorneys, and appointed attorneys, all coordinated through the Office of the Defender General. When public defenders or contract defenders cannot represent a client due to conflicts, the court appoints an ad hoc attorney to the case.

[Office of the Defender General, Juvenile Division](#)

6 Baldwin Street, 4th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05633
(802) 828-3168

The Juvenile Defender's Office primarily provides ongoing post-disposition representation to children and youth who are in the custody of the Department for Families and Children and were represented in original family court proceedings by a public defender. It provides representation for these clients at case plan review meetings, administrative hearings at the Woodside Detention Center, and at certain administrative appeal hearings and judicial hearings. The staff advocates for these children in a wide variety of situations. The supervising attorney in the office also sits on several committees and councils focused on youth justice and family services and monitors proposed legislation related to these issues. The office also acts as a resource center for public defenders regarding youth rights law and resources for youth clients and their families. Law students and graduates may see their website for clerkship information.

Virginia

Virginia provides counsel to indigent youth through a combination of public defender offices and private attorneys appointed by the court. The Virginia Indigent Defense Commission, an independent state agency within the judicial branch, oversees indigent defense in Virginia and certifies attorneys to represent indigent clients. State statute defines where public defender offices are located.

[Legal Aid Justice Center, JustChildren Program](#)

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 977-0553

The JustChildren Program is Virginia's largest children's law program. JustChildren relies on a range of strategies to make sure the commonwealth's most vulnerable young people receive the services and support they need to lead successful lives in their communities. Their strategies include individual representation, community education and organizing, and statewide advocacy. From their Charlottesville, Richmond, and Petersburg offices, JustChildren provides free legal representation to low-income children who have unmet needs in the education, foster care, and juvenile legal systems. They produce popular training materials for lawyers, parents, and other service providers to help them become informed and skilled advocates. JustChildren's attorneys and organizers also seek local and statewide reforms to improve the systems that children depend on. Through coalition building, policy advocacy, and litigation, they make lasting improvements for all children in Virginia. JustChildren offers volunteer opportunities for students. Interested students and graduates are encouraged to visit their website and/or contact JustChildren for more details on how to apply and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Virginia Indigent Defense Commission](#)

1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 662-7249

The Virginia Indigent Defense Commission (VIDC) has 28 Public Defender Offices and two satellite offices serving communities throughout the commonwealth. Each of the Public Defender Offices handles trial and appellate cases and tries cases in the general district, juvenile, and circuit courts. VIDC has internship opportunities for law students and undergraduates. Please refer to the website for information on how to apply.

Washington

Washington provides counsel to indigent youth through a county-based system that includes public defender offices, contract attorneys, and private appointed attorneys.

[Legal Counsel for Youth and Children](#)

P.O. Box 28629
Seattle, WA 98118
(206) 494-0323

Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC) protects the interests and safety of youth in Washington by advancing their legal rights. They accomplish their mission through direct legal representation, strong community partnerships, and systemic advocacy. Their four main focus areas include child welfare, juvenile court, immigrant youth and families, and youth homelessness. In King County, LCYC provides holistic legal advocacy to youth in juvenile court matters but also assists youth with education, housing, immigration, and public benefits. LCYC offers externships to law students in the fall, spring, and summer. Interested students are encouraged to visit LCYC's website to learn how to apply.

[TeamChild](#)

1225 S. Weller, Suite 420
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 322-2444

Every day, thousands of youth face profound legal and social barriers that increase their chances of dropping out of school, being homeless, or ending up in the juvenile legal system. TeamChild uses its legal expertise and community partnerships to break down barriers to community services to overcome the root causes of a youth's involvement in the juvenile legal system. TeamChild believes that it is the paramount duty of our community to help youth overcome the obstacles of poverty, juvenile court involvement, disability, neglect and abuse, racism, and discrimination to achieve their true potential. TeamChild upholds the rights of youth involved, or at risk of involvement, in the juvenile legal system to help them secure the education, health care, housing, and other support they need to achieve positive outcomes. TeamChild offers internship/externship opportunities for students. Students and graduates

are encouraged to visit TeamChild’s website for more details on how to apply and to learn about other academic and postgraduate opportunities.

West Virginia

West Virginia provides counsel to indigent youth through West Virginia Public Defender Services, a state-funded entity. The Public Defender Services creates a public defender corporation in each judicial circuit to provide representation. The office may also contract with attorneys or nonprofit groups to provide defense services.

[Public Defender Services](#)

One Players Club Drive, Suite 301
Charleston, WV 25311
(304) 558-3905

The Public Defender Services funds all indigent defense for the State of West Virginia. Representation is provided by two methods: private attorneys on a court-appointed basis and full-time public defenders. Public Defender Services pays each private attorney and other service providers for each case pursuant to a court order, following review by a circuit judge. Full-time public defenders are employees of a Public Defender Corporation (PDC) organized at the circuit court level. These corporations are separate legal entities that operate as nonprofit corporations, but they are funded by Public Defender Services. The PDCs operate in 30 counties in the state. In addition to payment for legal services in criminal proceedings, Public Defender Services pays for representation of indigent parties in abuse and neglect, mental hygiene, and juvenile proceedings.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin provides counsel to indigent youth through a statewide public defender office that provides trial and appellate representation in juvenile delinquency cases. Public defenders handle about 60 percent of cases; overflow and conflict cases are handled by private attorneys who are certified by the state public defender.

[Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office](#)

17 S. Fairchild St
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 266-9150

The mission of the Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office (SPD) is to promote justice throughout Wisconsin by providing high-quality legal services, protecting individual rights, and advocating as a criminal justice partner for effective defender services and a fair and rational criminal legal system. SPD has specialty practice divisions, including a Juvenile Practice Group, which focuses on helping ensure that all youth in Wisconsin receive competent and skilled representation. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit SPD’s website for more details and/or contact SPD for more details on how to apply

and to learn about other available academic and postgraduate opportunities, as well as useful resources for youth defense practice.

Wyoming

Wyoming provides counsel to indigent youth statewide through the Office of the State Public Defender, which represents youth in delinquency cases and on appeal. The Public Defender receives 85 percent of its budget from the state, while counties pay the remaining 15 percent.

[Wyoming Children's Law Center, Inc.](#)

710 E Garfield St., Ste 249
Laramie, WY 82070
(307) 632-3614

Wyoming Children's Law Center (WCLC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2009. WCLC's mission is to help Wyoming children and their families navigate legal issues affecting a child's education, safety, or well-being and work to improve laws and policies that harm children and vulnerable adults. WCLC focuses on education advocacy, youth crisis and legal system reforms, an interdisciplinary approach to family law, and filling a critical gap in low-income legal services. WCLC offers internship/externship opportunities for undergraduate, law, and graduate students. Students and graduates are encouraged to visit WCLC's website to learn about available academic and postgraduate opportunities.

[Wyoming Office of the State Public Defender](#)

312 West 22nd Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002
(307) 777-7519

The Office of the State Public Defender's sole purpose is to provide effective assistance of counsel to indigent adults and youth accused of a crime in the circuit, district, and juvenile courts. The Office of the State Public Defender maintains 15 field offices located throughout the state. The public defender ensures the protection of due process rights for its clients at all stages of a criminal proceeding by informing, advising, advocating, and negotiating on behalf of the client. The agency represents youth accused of delinquency in juvenile court and individuals on appeal in the Wyoming Supreme Court.

Other Helpful Career Links and Resources

[The Gault Center](#)

The Gault Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting justice for all children by ensuring excellence in youth defense. Through community building, training, and policy reform, the Gault Center provides national leadership on youth defense issues and is committed to promoting racial justice, eliminating racial and ethnic disparities, and advocating for overrepresented populations in juvenile court. Their reach extends to urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas, where they elevate the voices of youth, families, and defenders to ensure that the reform of juvenile courts includes the protection of children’s rights—particularly the right to counsel.

[Gault Center Youth Defense Regions](#)

The Gault Center collaborates with nine Regional Youth Defender Centers that coordinate activities within the regions. The regional centers are an excellent resource for students who are seeking to connect with youth defense leaders in their jurisdiction. You can find the contact information for each of the regional centers on the next page of this guide and learn more by visiting the Gault Center’s website.

[Public Defender Handbook: NYU School of Law, Public Interest Law Center](#)

This handbook is a good complementary guide for those looking to go into youth defense practice.

[PSJD](#)

PSJD is a unique online clearinghouse for law students and lawyers to connect with public interest job listings and career-building resources. The PSJD database includes job listings for internships (fall, spring, and summer), postgraduate fellowships, and a wide variety of permanent positions. Registered users may search the database, flag and store opportunities for later viewing, and receive email alerts with newly posted opportunities. Students may sign up for an account for free on PSJD’s website. PSJD also offers an online library of educational and career-building resources for those interested in pursuing a career in public service that is publicly available to all website visitors.

[Equal Justice Works](#)

Equal Justice Works offers a continuum of opportunities and resources that provide students and graduates with training and skills that enable them to provide effective representation to underserved communities.

[Vanderbilt Law School’s Project-Based Fellowships Guide](#)

Vanderbilt Law School organized this guide to help law students plan and coordinate their application for a project-based fellowship.

[National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#)

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) seeks to provide judges and courts handling youth, family, and domestic violence cases with training, support, and information. NCJFCJ’s National Center for Juvenile Justice conducts research studies and gathers data on juvenile courts and delinquency. These findings assist the Council’s reform efforts for adopting age-appropriate measures in juvenile courts, eliminating shackling in court, and reducing fines and fees. The Council’s child welfare

and juvenile law programs also include initiatives for trauma-informed courts and keeping kids in school by reducing court referrals.

[National Legal Aid and Defender Association](#)

The National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) is America's oldest and largest nonprofit association devoted to excellence in the delivery of legal services to those who cannot afford counsel. This organization provides advocacy, guidance, information, training, and technical assistance to its legal partners across the nation. NLADA's website contains a job board where organizations may post available opportunities, including internships.

Please contact the Gault Center at inquiries@defendyouthrights.org with additions, deletions, or corrections to this document.

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