

Working with the Orleans Public Defenders

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Hello everyone!

My name is Raissi Bysiewicz and I am a rising senior from Branford, CT majoring in English and International Relations. This summer I will be volunteering at the Orleans Public Defenders' as an Intern Investigator. The Orleans Public Defenders Office strives to provide excellent representation for the poor.

It is committed to protecting the rights ensured by the Louisiana and United States Constitutions and maintaining abidance to the rule of law; cultivating a more open,

inclusive society by providing indigent populations with access to the protection of the courts; and aiding in the construction and extension of rehabilitation and alternative programs for clients and their families.

As an Intern Investigator, I will work alongside partners as the lead investigators on criminal cases, ranging from misdemeanors to felonies, across the city of New Orleans. I will be responsible for locating and interviewing witnesses, taking statements, photographing crime scenes, writing investigative reports, testifying in court, performing background checks, and assisting attorneys throughout the trial preparation process.

Over the course of this experience, I hope to gain an understanding of the unique roles played by all members of a client's representation team, including that of the attorney, investigator, client advocate, social worker, and court support administrator; to uncover what alternatives to incarceration are available to clients; to understand what community-based social services, treatment programs, job, and housing opportunities are available to clients; to expand my knowledge of the systemic biases within the United States' litigation and criminal justice system such as racism and funding limitations; and to learn how OPD's work contributes to the broader campaign for a more equitable American justice system.

I strongly believe that this internship relates to the Newcomb College Institute's mission of educating undergraduates for women's leadership. It will afford me a unique perspective into the criminal justice system, specifically that of New Orleans, as well as grant me the unparalleled opportunity to impact the lives of others. I am confident that my experiences as an Intern Investigator will not only provide me with an exceptional foundation for a future career in social justice law, but also serve as a catalyst for the changemaker I hope to become.

Over the next few weeks, I will be anxiously awaiting my return to New Orleans to begin training with OPD! I am so excited to meet my fellow investigators and learn from all of them. Thank you, Newcomb, for helping to make this opportunity possible!

All the best,

Raissi