The Office of the Federal Public Defender, Western District of Pennsylvania, operates under authority of the Criminal Justice Act of 1964 (as amended), 18 U.S.C. § 3006A (CJA). We provide defense services to individuals who are financially unable to obtain adequate representation in Federal criminal trials and appeals, as well as in non-capital and capital habeas corpus matters. We are able to supervise two social work interns, one in the Trial and Appellate Unit and one in the Capital Habeas Unit. Preference will be given to second-year students, or to first-year students with relevant previous experience.

The Capital Habeas Unit represents death row inmates in habeas corpus proceedings at the federal level. The Trial and Appellate Unit represents individuals who are under investigation for, or have been charged with, federal crimes and parole and probation violations. Representation extends from the grand jury through trial level matters in the United States District Court, direct appeals in the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and Supreme Court of the United States, and in habeas corpus proceedings in non-capital cases.

Our clients also include individuals sentenced as juveniles to mandatory life without parole, now eligible for relief under Miller v. Alabama and Montgomery v. Louisiana.

Social work interns in each unit may assist with locating and interviewing witnesses, defendants and their families; collecting, reviewing and organizing extensive records; researching issues, neighborhoods and community resources; writing reports for the defense team; preparing for and observing court proceedings; creating genograms, timelines, mitigation videos and other sentencing aids. Interns must be willing and able to meet with clients in the office, in the community and in prisons or jails.