

## About OPD & Social Workers

Since 1972, The Office of the Public Defender has been providing counsel to those unable to afford a private attorney. OPD is an independent State agency and provides legal services through 12 District staffs and 7 specialized divisions.

Each District conforms to the statutory geographic boundaries of the Maryland District Courts. Trial Divisions are maintained in all Circuit, District and Juvenile Courts throughout the state.

Social Workers have been an integral part of the OPD since 1992.

Licensed social workers work in 10 of the 12 OPD Districts and assist public defenders in cases with juvenile and adult psychosocial issues.

This includes helping attorneys with linking to community-based services, outpatient and in-patient substance abuse programs, as well as preparing written psychosocial assessments and testifying in court.

The goal of this collaborative effort is to strategize for successful disposition/sentencing plans in the court system.



Social Workers:  
An integral part of the  
OPD team.

## Maryland Office of the Public Defender



## Elizabeth Julian Acting Public Defender for the State of Maryland

### Maryland Office of the Public Defender

Social Work Services  
201 East Baltimore Street, Suite 800  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-347-1077  
Fax: 410-244-7140  
[www.opd.state.md.us](http://www.opd.state.md.us)



## Maryland Office of the Public Defender



## Social Work Internship Opportunities

### Maryland OPD

*Safeguarding fundamental  
individual rights and  
ensuring access to the  
protections guaranteed by the  
United States Constitution.*

[www.opd.state.md.us](http://www.opd.state.md.us)

## Office of the Public Defender (OPD)

### Internship Opportunities:

OPD offers social work students a variety of opportunities, including clinical and legislative advocacy internships.



OPD Social Work Interns work directly with clients and community services

Under agreements with area colleges and universities, social work students receive firsthand learning opportunities in forensic social work, neighborhood defense, and legislative affairs.

OPD social work interns work with attorneys, law clerks, investigators and paralegals as part of a "holistic defense" which seeks to assess the cultural, mental health, employment, educational, and social needs of indigent clients charged with criminal offenses.

OPD clients are often in need of health benefits, employment, housing, family counseling, drug and alcohol treatment, alternative placement and/or immigration counseling. Social workers provide valuable skills in helping clients access these services.

### Advantages of a Clinically-Based OPD Social Work Internship

- Work on a multidisciplinary team and through actual casework, learn about legal defense and community-based client advocacy.
- Work with and in local and State organizations and systems.
- Advocate for juvenile clients, serving as a liaison between clients and families, and assisting in locating alternative placements.
- Gain valuable experience utilizing clinical skills in a real-world environment.

### Advantages of an OPD Legislative Advocacy/Social Work Internship

- Work on multidisciplinary team while learning legislative advocacy.
- Work with State legislators/staff, and advocates to identify legislative support/sponsors.
- Learn the Maryland legislation process.



**All OPD Social Work Interns are supervised by LGSW and/or LCSW-C Staff Social Workers**

### Interested in an Office of the Public Defender Social Work Internship?



OPD Social Work Interns learn about Maryland's legal system

- Contact your college or university's Field Office
- Contact the Office of the Public Defender Social Work Services:

**Melissa Nolan, LCSW-C**

*Social Work Manager*  
[mnolan@opd.state.md.us](mailto:mnolan@opd.state.md.us)  
Phone: 410-347-1077

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