

MEMORANDUM

THE
PUBLIC
DEFENDER
SERVICE
for the District of Columbia



To: Public Defense Oriented Students
From: Jennifer Thomas
Legal Recruiting Manager
Date: June 28, 2008
Re: The Path to Becoming a Public Defender

On Saturday July 26, 2008 the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia (PDSDC) is hosting a mini conference for students interested in becoming public defenders. *The Path to Becoming a Public Defender* is a response to what I see in my position as a legal recruiter: limited information about how to prepare for a career in indigent criminal defense representation combined with a lack of comprehensive information about the diverse hiring practices and timelines followed by the wide array of indigent defense offices.

While a handful of organizations assist practicing public defenders, none exists to support and educate students as they plan for their defense careers. It is essential that students entering this challenging legal specialty have accurate and timely knowledge of the complexities of public defense so that they can prepare for the field and make well informed employment decisions. The mini conference is an important first step in providing that knowledge and beginning a dialogue about additional steps to support this population.

Beginning with a light breakfast and opening plenary, the conference includes career, skills and substantive tracks to allow students to self direct their learning. In addition to the working sessions, one of the conference highlights is the networking lunch where students will meet with public defenders from a variety of national offices.

In recognition of the high loan burden faced by public interest law students, *The Path to Becoming a Public Defender* is free of charge. George Washington University Law School has generously provided conference space, and we have sought other sponsors to cover materials and refreshments. We hope that you can join us for the educational event.

Please see the *Conference Schedule at a Glance*, and register to attend at www.pdsdc.org. Questions? Please call or email me at (202) 8242337 or jenthomas@pdsdc.org.

I look forward to seeing you in July!