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# HBCU

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
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## ABOUT US

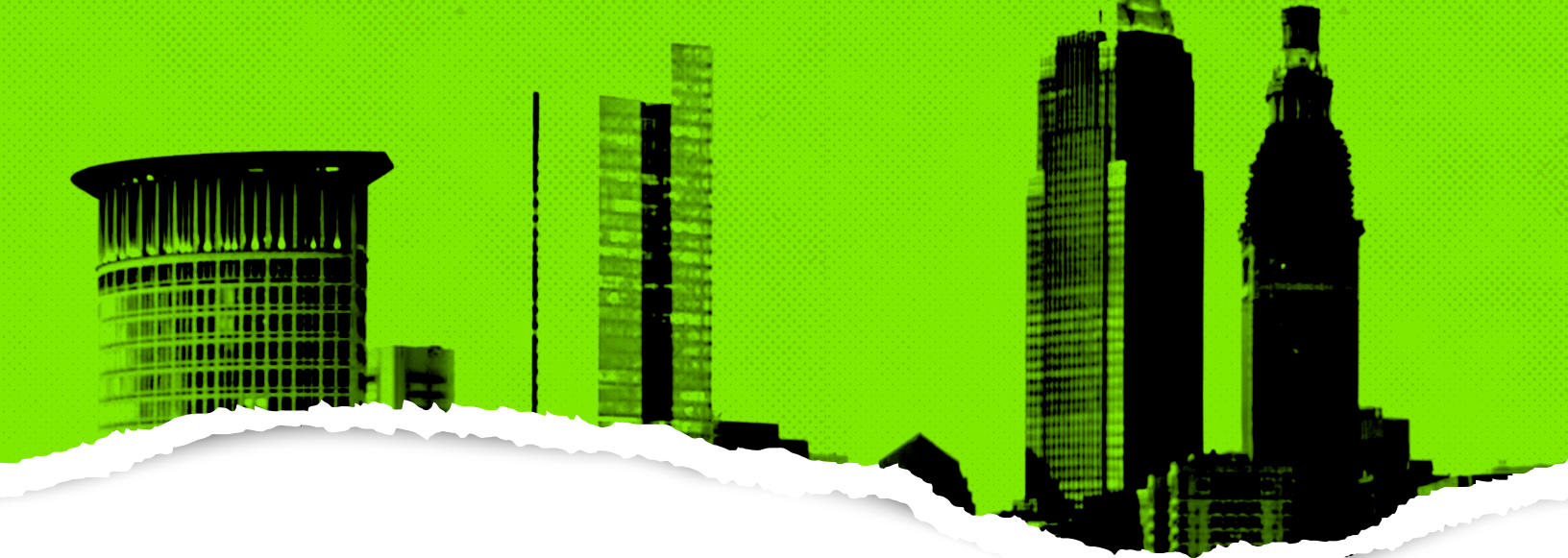
The Black Public Defenders Association (BPDA) is a movement-led organization that supports a national network of skilled Black defenders (trial-attorneys, social workers, investigators, civil defense, immigration, family defense, and client advocates) who fight against mass incarceration and other racist carceral systems. Building a pipeline of Black defenders is one of our core pillars.

## ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The BPDA Community Engagement Fellowship is a 12-week summer program that pairs Black undergraduate and graduate HBCU students, who aspire to do racial equity and community defense work, with public defender offices. The program is open to students seeking careers in all areas of public defense.

The BPDA Community Engagement Fellowship also provides an opportunity for participating public defender offices to access a fully paid, full-time intern for the summer at little to no cost to them. The chosen host sites will provide excellent opportunities to implement a project or program that expands their outreach to the communities they serve in an effort to promote racial equity.





**CUYAHOGA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
**CLEVELAND**

The Cuyahoga County Office of the Public Defender was just awarded funding for a community engagement attorney for 2024. The BPDA Fellow will work with the attorney to develop a presence in the neighborhoods the office serves daily by setting up office hours at local rec centers, libraries or other community centers to answer general questions or provide resources to clients in need. Part of the duties of the Fellow would be to identify areas of interest for particular neighborhoods and develop tailored information for different areas to help reach the general public.

The Fellow will be a critical component of launching a new division within our office. They will work closely with the Deputy Chief Public Defender and the community engagement attorney to create a roll out plan for the launch of the community office hours. The Fellow will also be a constant presence at community events and local informational sessions where the office has a presence.

The Fellow will also work on the Re Entry Release project launched in the Summer of 2023. This project is in its infancy but is set to continue to grow into 2024, and the Fellow will help coordinate with the local partners for donations and advertisement.

The Fellow will also work closely with our social media specialist to help develop strategies to publicize the new community engagement initiatives and the role of the community engagement attorney. The Fellow will also play a critical role in developing media for all aspects of community education, information, and engagement.





## CONNECTICUT DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

# HARTFORD

Part of the vision for the Connecticut Division of Public Defender Services is rebranding with a focus on community engagement outside of the court setting.

One component of the rebranding is a grassroots campaign, led by the Chief, that will cover the entire state. The campaign will include opportunities for dialogue with clients and their families, dissemination of “know your rights” material, encouragement to pursue dreams, even if setbacks occur, and more. Volunteers from the field offices, the Office of the Chief Public Defender and the BPDA Fellow will all play a huge role in making this campaign unique, memorable, and successful.

The team will attend small and large-scale events throughout the state. The BPDA Fellow will compile and analyze the data gathered at these events. The BPDA Fellow also will craft surveys; review and ask questions about legal rights; and document experiences within and shaped by the criminal legal system based on race, ethnicity, gender of all attendees.

The office will build connections through community conversations. The BPDA Fellow will work one-on-one with the Chief and assist attorneys and support staff in one of their Community Courts and at least one of their field offices. The BPDA Fellow will interact with clients and their families in court and in the community, perform research, data collection and analysis, and work on framing a new clinic to assist incarcerated and formerly incarcerated clients as they transition back into regular life.





## ORLEANS PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE

# NEW ORLEANS

The Orleans Public Defenders Office (OPD) is seeking students interested in public defense and criminal legal advocacy for their Client Advocate Internship program.

Client Advocate & Community Engagement Interns will join their Client Services Division and be partnered with a Client Advocate during the internship. This internship will give students unique insight into the criminal legal system and criminal defense representation in New Orleans. Interns will work to support and improve advocacy for clients through the case process, thus increasing success upon release.

In this role, interns will assist the Client Advocate in identifying alternatives to incarceration and utilize individual mitigation plans to reduce detention for clients and divert clients to more appropriate social services and treatment. This includes direct client contact, engagement with community members, and coordination with various social service and professional entities. Interns will also partner with the Community Engagement team to assist with community outreach endeavors.

Interns will be in a position to have a profound impact on clients' lives—one that many do not get an opportunity to experience. These experiences can provide a solid foundation for a diverse number of academic disciplines and future careers—from law to the social sciences. The students' experience in their internship program will also demonstrate responsibility and commitment to public service to both graduate and law schools.





**DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA**

# PHILADELPHIA

The Defender Association of Philadelphia seeks a Fellow to assist in coordinating the 10-week summer session of Junior Defenders, a community education program designed for middle and high school students who attend school in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system.

The program was designed to educate youth about the courts, engage young people who have ambitions and talents — but are typically not invested in — to become leaders in their schools and community, and encourage youth to challenge injustice and participate in pro-social behaviors to build safer, stronger communities.

The Fellow will assist the Junior Defenders program coordinator by:

- Accompanying the Junior Defenders during weekly sessions to court watch and shadow Defenders at work
- Facilitating debriefs of court watch sessions and shadowing opportunities
- Working as Junior Defender team lead to create the supplemental legal materials
- Serving as youth navigator to refer children who have been arrested and their families who attend community lawyering events to the Youth Participatory Defense hub, as appropriate
- Scheduling the community lawyering events, including monthly Barber Shop series and working to promote the event on social media
- Attending the specialized training for attorneys
- Providing feedback on the implementation of this project.



MEET THE TEAM

# HBCU COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP



Mrs. Alaina Bloodworth is a fierce advocate for BPDA's mission. She attended Southern University A&M College where she received both her B.S. in Elementary Education and her Juris Doctorate. Previously, she served as a public defender and the Director of Students, managing the training and hiring of student law clerks and investigators.



Jasmine Cole has spent the entirety of her legal career working in criminal defense. She started in the private sector before becoming the first staff attorney for a non-profit organization, where she advocated for early release and pardon consideration for juvenile lifers within Louisiana's prison system. Jasmine now assures the productivity of BPDA's programs.





# THANK YOU

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

[BLACKDEFENDER.ORG/COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT-FELLOWSHIP](https://blackdefender.org/community-engagement-fellowship)

CONTACT: [PROGRAMS@BLACKDEFENDER.ORG](mailto:PROGRAMS@BLACKDEFENDER.ORG)

