PLACEMENT NAME:
Prisoners’ Legal Services of New York

1) A brief statement about your office generally (e.g., mission, jurisdiction, size, nature of practice, etc.)

We provide civil legal services to people incarcerated in New York State prisons, focusing on civil rights, conditions of confinement and sentence calculations. Most of our work is as appellate lawyers in administrative cases and as trial attorneys in civil rights cases.

2) A description of the experiences law students are likely to have at your office, including the types of tasks a student may perform.

We treat law students as entry level attorneys. They handle intake, work up cases for possible representation, correspond with clients, draft administrative appeals and prepare litigation documents. Sometimes students work on research projects, but most of their time will be spent working on clients’ cases. Students work closely with the attorneys in the office. Students who stay with us for more than one semester may follow a case through to argue in state or federal court.

3) Any special requirements you have for student selection (e.g., writing sample, class standing, experience, third year students only, background check, etc.)

Students should demonstrate an interest in criminal justice and/or poverty law and be able to write well. Resumes should be accompanied by cover letters explaining their interest in the kind of work we do.

4) Other information you would like posted on the field placement website about your office and student opportunities

We are a friendly and informal office. We try to provide a useful internship that will expose our students to the practice of humane, non-profit civil rights law. We do not usually do a lot of court room work and the internship tends to be writing intensive.

5) Anything else that you think would be helpful or informative.

If interns can schedule one full day a week in the office, it makes it easier to take them on client visits. Our clients are scattered across the state prison system so we have to drive a bit to see them. We also have offices in Buffalo, Ithaca and Plattsburgh, all of which take interns.