

TO: ALBANY LAW CLINIC & JUSTICE CENTER
FIELD PLACEMENT CLINIC

PLACEMENT NAME: OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY, ETHICS, AND ACCESS;
NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPT

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY: David N. Green, *Office of Labor Relations*

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

The Office for Diversity, Ethics, and Access (ODEA) facilitates the establishment, maintenance, and continuous improvement of a work environment which is equitable, accessible, and in compliance with legal mandates, as well as inclusive of the various communities served by the New York State Education Department (SED). Housed in the Office for Human Resources Management (HRM), its comprehensive role includes the many facets of diversity planning and management, equal opportunity program implementation, and the ongoing advisement of managers and staff regarding compliance with New York State's Ethics and Human Rights Laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, and other pertinent legislation. ODEA develops and implements policy, designs and conducts training, administers a variety of programs to attract and retain an increasingly diverse workforce, and collaborates with offices throughout the Department to promote SED as an employer of choice.

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

The intern will perform a combination of some or all of the following tasks, depending on expressed interest or demonstrated knowledge, skill, or abilities:

1. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the development, updating, and implementation of policy in the areas of ethics, reasonable accommodation and accessibility, human rights, discrimination and harassment, equal opportunity, domestic violence prevention, and others pertinent to the Department's workforce, mission, and vision*
2. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the development and conduct of training on topics germane to the Office's responsibilities as noted above*
3. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the advisement of Department managers and staff on issues concerning diversity planning and management*
4. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the conduct of conflict resolution and mediation activities to provide a safe and responsive forum for employees to voice their issues, work through problems with assistance and guidance, and break through communication barriers on an informal basis*
5. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the investigation and resolution of complaints of discrimination, harassment, etc. to appropriately address concerns at every level, provide redress, and prevent institutional liability*

6. *Assist and support ODEA management and staff in work related to the Director's service on the Committees on the Professions*
7. *Assist and support ODEA management and staff in their role pertaining to the Department's oversight and implementation of the federal government's economic stimulus program for education in New York State*
8. *Assist ODEA management and staff in the preparation of correspondence and reports as assigned*

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

The Office is seeking a diverse and inclusive pool of candidates, and encourages applicants from a wide range of backgrounds, including those from various ethnic and cultural populations, communities of color, and those who are individuals with disabilities.

4) Websites for further information:

<http://www.nysed.gov/home.html>

<http://www.nysed.gov/oms/hrm>

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

The Office serves as the leading champion for comprehensive issues of access and inclusion for staff, customers, and the professions represented in the Department's work and constituencies. It provides oversight of the Department's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and New York State's Human Rights Laws to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to secure reasonable accommodations to perform their assigned duties. Its Director serves as the Department liaison to the New York State Commission on Public Integrity, and advises employees on regulations and issues germane to their role as public servants pursuant to the Public Officers Law to avoid violations and breaches of the public trust.

The Director further serves on SED's Committees on the Professions, which conduct hearings on professional license restorations, moral character issues, and consent decrees for individuals who are, or have been, practitioners in 48 licensed professions. Most recently, the Office has become involved in several of the Department's newly-established committees to oversee the distribution, utilization, and risk management of federal stimulus funds for education in New York State.

The intern will work closely with management and staff in the Office of Diversity, Ethics, and Access and participate in a wide range of activities for which the Office has responsibility. He/she will receive ongoing supervisory input from both the Director of ODEA and the Director of the Labor Relations Bureau, have exposure to other offices within Human Resources Management and elsewhere within the Department, and have the opportunity to develop and share ideas and strategies for the continued success of the Department's diversity planning and management program.