

Description of the Project

The Louisiana Capital Assistance Center (LCAC) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization providing legal representation to poor people charged with capital crimes in Louisiana for over twenty years. Committed to excellence in capital defence, the LCAC emphasizes client-centered representation, constantly seeks to develop new and innovative advocacy strategies, and pursues systematic litigation related to issues such as racism in the criminal justice system and lack of funding for adequate representation.

I am eagerly looking forward to working with the LCAC this Summer. My role will be that of a legal intern who will assist the LCAC in the trial, appellate, and post-conviction representation of indigent clients. This will involve understanding the facts of the case, learning about the basics of Louisiana criminal law and doing some investigative work. Additionally, the LCAC conducts exhaustive mitigation investigations for the penalty phase of the trial. During the penalty phase, the LCAC attorneys are permitted to present mitigating evidence to show why the defendant shouldn't receive a sentence of death. My contribution to this portion of their work will include investigating the client's history and background in search of any mitigating factors that may play a role in the case. Finally, the LCAC also pursues individual legal issues and projects that are designed to have a broader impact on capital litigation. These include discrimination in jury selection, racial discrimination in charging practises and defendants with serious mental illness. My contributions to these projects will involve organising relevant legal resources, going through past cases, and determining how these structural problems manifest themselves in the United states.

Several of the individuals charged with capital crimes are victims of unfortunate circumstances who may face several challenges as they navigate the legal system. My time at the LCAC will allow me to play a role in providing quality legal representation to such clients while simultaneously work towards blunting the harshness of the death penalty nationwide. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity and look forward to learning, growing, and doing whatever I can to help the LCAC fulfil its mission.