

The logo for Mental Health Advocacy Services features the text "MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY SERVICES" in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "MENTAL HEALTH" on the top line, "ADVOCACY" on the middle line, and "SERVICES" on the bottom line. The text is white and set against a dark, stylized background that resembles a starburst or a cluster of rays emanating from the top left corner.

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MHAS-LA.ORG

A nonprofit organization protecting and advancing the legal rights of people with mental disabilities.

Summer Law Clerk Experience at Mental Health Advocacy Services

Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS) provides free legal services to low-income people with mental health disabilities in the areas of housing, public benefits, consumer law, and re-entry law, among others. MHAS is excited to offer a paid summer law clerk program.

Range of Legal Work: Clerks are assigned to an MHAS team and work alongside the attorneys and advocates on that team. They handle multiple client intakes to develop strong client interviewing, issue spotting, and legal counseling skills throughout the summer. They also work on more extensive client matters, which may include writing demand letters, negotiating with third parties, drafting administrative or court documents, or even appearing at a hearing. All clerks are responsible for completing a research memo by the end of the summer. Clerks participate in weekly meetings with their team, one-on-one meetings with their supervisor, all-attorney case reviews, and officewide staff meetings. MHAS has a collegial culture, and attorneys operate with an open-door policy encouraging frequent contact, questions, and discussion with clerks.

Introductory and Ongoing Trainings: MHAS begins the summer with a series of “nutshell” trainings on topics students are likely to encounter during the summer. These include trainings on practical topics, including client interviewing and ethics, and substantive topics, including mental health law, public benefits, housing, and consumer law. Clerks are also invited to participate in trainings at other legal services organizations throughout the summer.

Court Visits and Field Trips: Students have the opportunity to visit courts in action and speak with local judges. Court visits typically include delinquency court and Department 95 mental health court. Each summer numerous field trips are also offered. Past summer tours have included Metropolitan State Hospital, residential treatment centers, mental health clinic facilities, and the Twin Towers jail mental health facility.

Brown Bag Networking Lunches: MHAS organizes discussion opportunities at which attorneys, both from the public interest and private sectors, meet with law clerks to discuss different career paths. Past brown bag lunches have featured attorneys working at law firms, in-house at corporations, in criminal law, and in judicial clerkships.

Social Activities: To encourage a collegial working environment, MHAS offers various social activities throughout the summer. Past activities have included a pool party at our Executive Director’s house, book clubs, and happy hours.

Resumes are accepted beginning in January. Please email your cover letter, resume, and writing sample to Jo Bloomfield at jbloomfield@mhas-la.org.