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New York State Attorney General Practicum



The clinic allows Cornell Law students to work within The New York Attorney General Office on ongoing litigation matters in Syracuse, New York. Students assist attorneys in the defense of claims, complaints, and petitions brought against the State of New York, State agencies, or employees in both State and Federal courts.

The New York State Attorney General Practicum is an excellent opportunity for students to experience government lawyering in practice, work on active and pending matters, and learn about active New York litigation practice.

Student Experience

Students in the New York State Attorney General Clinic assist attorneys in the defense of claims, complaints, and petitions brought against the State of New York, State agencies, or employees in both state and federal courts. Students will work both in the Office of the Attorney General and on campus. There will be an opportunity to draft pleadings and other court documents as well as attend trials, hearings, court arguments, and pretrial proceedings in both state and federal courts. A Practice Order will permit students — with attorney supervision and approval — to sign legal documents and, in limited instances, to handle court proceedings.

In addition to acquiring litigation skills, students will learn about the Attorney General's public advocacy litigation and could have the opportunity to work on new and challenging issues. Past students have worked on opposing challenges to the practices of a state agency and on defending state legislation. There will also be a pro bono opportunity to accompany an attorney to a volunteer legal services clinic operated by the Onondaga County Bar Association.

The classroom portion of the clinic, taught by assistant attorneys general in the Syracuse Regional Office, will address a different area of attorney general practice each week, including medical malpractice, defective highway design, public advocacy litigation and the regulation of charities, 1983 civil rights actions in federal court, petitions in state court seeking to overturn state actions, and prisoner claims.

Guest speakers include judges in various state and federal courts, Assistant Attorneys General, and agency counsel.

The course meets the definition of an experiential course under the rules promulgated by the American Bar Association requiring law students to take at least 6 credits of experiential courses. The clinic also allows each participant to earn the 50-hour pro bono credit required of New York State Bar admission.