



Isis Misdary directs the Criminal Defense and Community Advocacy Clinic and teaches Criminal Law at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark, New Jersey in the United States. Prior to Seton Hall, Professor Misdary was the Community Empowerment Supervisor at Beyond Legal Aid, a leader in community-directed lawyering and legal services.

Professor Misdary received an undergraduate degree from Villanova University, a Masters of Fine Arts from University of California San Diego, and a law degree from Georgetown. Professor Misdary is a Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow for New Americans and the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts/Theatre Communications Group grant for directors. Prior to Beyond, Professor Misdary was proud to work as a public defender for several years at the Defender Association of Philadelphia, in the Municipal Court, Children and Youth Justice, Felony Waivers, and Major Felonies/Jury Trial units. They worked as an appellate liaison for the Children and Youth Justice Unit, facilitating challenges to the incarceration of young people without proper notice and hearing and for alleged technical violations associated with medical and psychiatric diagnoses protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

At the Defender Association, Professor Misdary also collaborated with nine-based community groups to implement “Participatory Defense,” a movement that empowers community members facing charges and their families, and friends to assist the public defender in case preparation and advocacy inside and outside the courtroom. Working with participatory defense organizers, volunteers, and facilitators, Professor Misdary created the Digital Defense Project to film the personal stories of community members facing charges to persuade judges, prosecutors, and other stakeholders. This led to several withdrawals of charges. Professor Misdary served as a Mentor Attorney for first year defenders and worked as a remote fellow with the International Legal Foundation to mentor local public defenders in the West Bank.