



## ACCESS TO JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM - FALL 2021

### Program Overview

The Access to Justice Internship Program has a two-fold purpose: to provide a unique opportunity for law student interns with non-profit civil legal aid providers located in areas without a local law school, and to provide on-going support for law students who complete unpaid internships with non-profit civil legal aid providers located in urban areas.

The goals are to encourage students to help address the legal problems of underserved individuals and communities and to educate future attorneys about those problems. Each law student will provide direct legal services to low-income clients under the supervision of accomplished lawyers, while learning about access to justice matters, legal decision-making, advocacy skills, attorney-client relationships, and legal institutions. Each supervising attorney will provide the law student with a variety of experiences and assignments, including significant research and writing.

During the academic year 2021-2022, the Commission will provide approximately 2 to 4 internships to law students. The academic year internship will be for one of the following time frames: Fall (September – December 2021) or Spring (January – May 2022). Fall interns may apply for continued funding for the spring semester during the spring application period.

Academic year interns will receive a stipend of \$2,500 per semester for 200 hours of work. Students will receive payment directly from the Texas Access to Justice Commission and will be issued a 1099 at the end of the year. The stipend is considered taxable income and students are responsible for ascertaining their own tax liability.

Each prospective intern will need to contact his/her desired legal aid organization to secure placement and must include the organization's name and the supervising attorney on his/her application.

Internship participants will be recognized on the Commission's website, in press releases, print publications, and in local law school media releases.

### Program Detail

#### ***To be considered for an internship, each student must:***

1. Complete and submit the attached application to the Commission. Applications for the Fall 2021 (September – December 2021) internship are due no later than **12pm, Friday, September 3**, and must include:
  - a. the intended legal aid organization at which the internship will be completed (application Section D); and
  - b. a statement from the legal aid staff attorney agreeing to host the student as an intern (application Section G).



### **Program Detail (cont.)**

2. Complete 200 hours of work by December 31, 2021.
3. Commit to submit on or before **12pm, January 7, 2022**, an end-of-internship 1,000-word essay that details his/her internship experience. The essay may be used by the respective law school to highlight the internship experience and will be published as a news release in connection with the annual Pro Bono Week celebration, as well as other places as the Commission sees fit.
4. Authorize the Commission to monitor how participation in the ATJIP has influenced his/her career (including but not limited to include periodic contact to review employment, pro bono involvement/activities, support of ATJ initiatives).

#### ***To be considered for an internship, each organization must:***

1. Develop an internship position that provides the law student significant work on legal issues for a minimum of 200 hours.
2. Designate an attorney with a minimum of three years of experience who will be responsible for supervising and working with the student intern for the duration of his/her internship and communicating with Commission staff.
3. Upon selection of the supervising attorney, duties are as follows:
  - a. Supervisors should ensure that each student receives an orientation about the mission of the office workplace policies and procedures, resources available, and confidentiality of information, documents and files. Supervisors are asked to provide training materials or a list of suggested readings to students.
  - b. Students should be assigned to do significant legal work. Supervisors are encouraged to assign tasks based on their needs, keeping in mind that some projects and/or opportunities for observation are more suited to student objectives than others. Supervisors are asked to plan challenging, varied assignments, including substantive legal research and writing.
  - c. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the student. If students receive work from several people, supervisors should be aware of the assignments and resolve any conflicts that arise. Students may occasionally work with non-lawyer professionals, but the student's work must be primarily legal in nature. Students are to meet regularly with his/her supervisor to discuss cases, proceedings, clients, professional responsibility issues, and activities the student has observed. Such interactions help the student develop insight into the role of lawyers.
  - d. Supervisors will be asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the internship to evaluate the ATJIP as it relates to the student experience.

#### **Available Placement Offices:**

Potential interns will need to apply directly to the legal aid organization with which they want to work. The potential intern will complete Sections A – F, plus supporting documentation, and the supervising attorney will fill out Section G of the application. Selected students will be announced by Wednesday, September 8, 2021.