ACCESS TO JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM – FALL 2022

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 *and* to provide on-going support for law students who complete unpaid internships with non-profit civil legal aid providers across the state.

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. Course/academic credit is not permitted in conjunction with participation in the ATJIP.

During the academic year 2022-2023, the Commission will provide approximately 2 to 4 internships to law students. The academic year internship will be for one of the following periods: Fall (September – December 2022) or Spring (January – May 2023). 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 provider to secure placement and must include the provider's name and the supervising attorney on his/her application. Only internships with civil legal aid providers in Texas who work on behalf of low-income Texans qualify. Judicial clerkships, public defender offices, and criminal work with the Innocence Project are examples of internships that would not qualify for stipends under this program. LLMs who are licensed attorneys are not candidates for the program.

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 related ATJ Internship application with a current resume to the Commission. Applications for the Fall 2022 (September – December 2022) internship are due no later than ***4pm CST, September 2, 2022,*** and must include:

    a. the intended legal aid organization at which the internship will be completed ((application Section D) potential interns will need to apply directly to the legal aid provider with which they want to work prior to submitting the ATJIP application); 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, 2022.

3. Commit to submitting an end-of-internship 1,000-word *substantive* essay detailing his/her internship experience **no later than January 6, 2023**. The essay may be used by the respective law school to highlight the internship experience and may be published as a news release in connection with the annual Pro Bono Week celebration, on the Commission's website, social media platforms, as well as other places as the Commission sees fit.

To be considered for an internship, each civil legal aid provider 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 provider 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 **5pm, September 9, 2022**.