



ACCESS TO JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Program Overview

The Access to Justice Internship Program provides a unique opportunity for law students to participate in an internship with non-profit providers of civil legal services located in areas without a local law school. The goals are to encourage more students to help address the legal problems of underserved individuals and communities, and to educate future attorneys about those problems. Each law student will receive hands-on training by working with accomplished lawyers, providing direct legal services to low-income clients, 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.

For the summer of 2012, the Commission will provide at least 15 internships to law students. The internships will not be restricted solely to students attending law school in Texas; however, at least one student will be selected from each of the nine Texas law schools. A stipend of \$400/week (a lump sum of \$4,000) will be provided to every student to help defray living expenses. The internship's duration is a ten-week commitment. Each prospective intern will need to contact his/her desired legal services 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 organization must:

1. Develop a summer internship position that provides the student a minimum of 40 hours each week for 10 weeks working on legal issues;
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; communicate same to Commission's 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.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (CONT.)

- 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:

Legal services placement locations are in rural areas without a law school.

To be considered for an internship, each student must:

1. Complete and submit the attached application to the Commission no later than 5pm, Friday, March 2, 2012. Application must include:
 - A. the intended legal services organization at which the internship will be completed (Section D of the application); and
 - B. a statement from the legal services staff attorney agreeing to host the student as an intern for the 10-week period (See Section G of the ATJIP Application).
2. Participate in a webinar or webcast which will primarily focus on professionalism, what to expect during the internship, and serve as a primer for working in the legal services setting.
3. Begin the internship by June 1, 2012. The intern is required to work full-time for 10 weeks.
4. Commit to submitting an end-of-internship 1,000-word essay detailing his/her internship experience. The essay will 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.

Once the organizations are selected as approved legal services programs to host an intern, the Commission will:

1. Advertise the internship program on a state and national level.
2. Select a committee to assist in evaluation and selection of students. Input from school representatives is preferred to give preference to students who have strong academic standing, passion about public interest work, and possess some fluency in Spanish (particularly for students planning to work in South Texas).
3. Work with the Committee to review student applications and select students for internships.
4. Provide students with internship selections by March 9, 2012.