



## Program Overview

**The Access to Justice Internship Program (ATJIP)** has two purposes: to provide a unique opportunity for law student interns with non-profit civil legal aid providers and to provide ongoing 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 various experiences and assignments, including significant research and writing.

During the Summer of 2025, the Commission will provide law students with approximately 6 to 8 internships. Summer internships will not be restricted solely to students attending law school in Texas; however, priority will be given to students attending Texas law schools. To be eligible for the Access to Justice Internship Program, the prospective internship must be unpaid and cannot provide class credit (including externship hours).

Summer interns will receive a stipend of \$5,000 for 400 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 taxable income, and students are responsible for ascertaining their tax liability.

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

Internship participants will be recognized on the Commission's website, in press releases, in print publications, and 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 Summer 2025 (June – August) internship are due no later than ***0pm.CST?Friday?February. 8028680*** 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 before 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).
2. Complete 400 hours of work by August 15, 2025.
3. Commit to submitting an end-of-internship 1,000-word *substantive* essay detailing his/her internship experience **no later than August 29, 2025**. The respective law school may use the essay to highlight the internship experience. It may be published as a news release concerning the annual Pro Bono Week celebration on the Commission’s website, social media platforms, and 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 400 hours.
2. Designate an attorney with a minimum of three years of experience who will supervise and work with the student intern for the duration of his/her internship and communicate 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 office's mission, workplace policies and procedures, available resources, 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 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's impact on the student experience.

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

Potential interns must apply directly to the legal aid provider they want to work with. 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 5 p.m. **Tuesday, March 11, 2025.**