
Summer 2021 Internships

The Texas Fair Defense Project uses a combination of impact litigation, direct representation, and policy advocacy to combat the criminalization of poverty in Texas. We have won landmark litigation victories at all levels of the court system, helped to pass major criminal reform legislation, and directly assisted hundreds of individual clients.

We are seeking talented law students to assist our attorneys in all aspects of their work. Interns will likely work in the following issue areas: access to quality counsel; bail reform and pretrial justice; modern-day debtors' prisons; license suspension for nonpayment of criminal justice debt; and other issues related to the criminalization of poverty.

Interns will be responsible for legal research and writing and factual development, including court observation, reviews of court files and other court data, and interviews with witnesses, clients, and potential clients. Interns may also assist with discovery, motion practice and drafting sections of policy reports. Interns may also contribute to amicus briefs filed in civil and criminal litigation that will likely have a significant impact on access to justice at a statewide level.

Interns will also assist TFDP staff to evaluate and resolve intakes from indigent defendants who have been denied access to counsel or have been threatened with jail for unpaid criminal justice debt they cannot afford to pay. In addition, interns will work directly with people caught up in the criminal system during our pro bono clinics, which have helped hundreds of low-income Texans clear warrants, satisfy fines and costs, and reclaim their driver's licenses. Depending on interest, interns may also assist with TFDP's policy advocacy. TFDP works with directly-affected people and community groups to advocate for reform at both the state and local level. In the past, interns have helped write influential policy reports and helped to draft successful legislation.

TFDP is looking for summer interns who are committed to social justice, especially in the context of criminal justice reform. Potential interns should have strong research, writing, and communication skills. They should be able to work independently and as a part of a team. We prefer interns who can dedicate at least 10 weeks of their summer to TFDP. We encourage interns to spend their summer working at the TFDP office in Austin, TX but will likely also have remote opportunities depending on the most up to date information available from the CDC and local health officials.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to managing attorney Jessica Johnson at jjohnson@fairdefense.org.
