TFDP
Texas Fair Defense Project

314 E Highland Mall, Suite 204
Austin, TX 78752
fairdefense.org

Phone: 512-637-5220
Fax: 512-637-5224

Texas Fair Defense Project – Attorney

Texas Fair Defense Project ("TFDP") is seeking a full-time attorney for our criminal record clearing work. The attorney will work with and report to our Pro Bono Program Director to expand access to criminal record clearing relief for people who cannot afford to hire an attorney in Texas. The attorney will play an essential role in expanding access to TFDP's legal services, which help people out of criminal legal system involvement.

While there is a possibility that this position may lead to permanent placement, it is grant-funded for one year and is considered temporary (but full-time with benefits).

About Texas Fair Defense Project: Texas Fair Defense Project is a small but growing nonprofit legal organization whose mission is to fight to end the criminalization of poverty in Texas. We do so by:

- Working directly with clients to disentangle them from the criminal legal system in matters that threaten freedom and dignity but do not have a currently-recognized constitutional right to appointed counsel, including Class C misdemeanor representation, criminal record clearing services, and early probation termination assistance;
- Using policy advocacy, community lawyering, and strategic litigation to shift power to the people impacted by the criminal legal system and push for systemic change; and
- Supporting organizers and community organizations in their campaigns fighting the carceral system.

Our office environment is collaborative, mission-focused, values-driven, and fast-paced. We prioritize community care and longevity, and actively work to foster a supportive and sustaining organizational culture. As an organization and as individuals, we are committed to antiracism work, which includes ongoing critical examination of our programs, relationships, and approaches. We will be expanding our programs and staffing in the coming months, growing from a staff of fourteen to seventeen in early 2022.

About the Pro Bono Program: In 2020, TFDP launched a statewide pro bono program to recruit, train, and supervise pro bono attorneys to join us in the fight to end the criminalization of poverty.

Through the program, pro bono attorneys assist low-income Texans in their communities with criminal record clearing cases to help Texans better access jobs and housing, as well as represent people who have ticket debt and related suspended driver's licenses. With the pro bono program, TFDP focuses on providing zealous, client-centered advocacy to individuals in need of services. TFDP also works with local community partners to do day-long pro bono clinics where there is a concentration of needs identified by the community partner. TFDP works with the community partner to organize the clinic, then trains and supervises pro bono volunteers to provide pro se assisted legal services to clinic applicants.

Job Responsibilities

Our office is currently functioning with a hybrid of remote and in-person work due to the global pandemic. Therefore, work location will be flexible until our office reopens based on available information from the CDC and local health officials. Once our office reopens, this position will be based in Austin, Texas, with the possibility of working from another location in Texas. The staff attorney reports to the Pro Bono Program Director. This position may require 1-6 days of travel per month.

The attorney will:

- Represent clients in their criminal record clearing cases
- Take on impact litigation cases or contested hearings
- Assist with intake and tracking criminal record clearing cases
- Work with pro bono team to assign cases and provide supervision and case management support to pro bono attorneys, including developing and maintaining volunteer attorney materials, resources, and trainings
- Work with partners to hold legal clinics for criminal record clearing
- Assist in staffing and preparing materials for legal clinics
- Supervise and train attorneys at record clearing clinics
- Help people obtain criminal record clearing relief through an assisted pro se model and develop assisted pro se expunction materials
- Partner with social service providers, governmental agencies, and other nonprofits to identify needs for services and opportunities for direct, assisted pro se, or pro bono representation for criminal record clearing in Texas

Qualifications

We are looking for candidates who have experience representing low-income people and dedication to uplifting the agency and dignity of their clients, as well as candidates who are

enthusiastic about engaging volunteers, students, and pro bono attorneys in this work. The ideal candidate is a self-starter who is organized, resourceful, diligent, and committed to seeing through projects that will benefit Texans in need of criminal record clearing assistance.

Required Qualifications:
- A J.D. with eligibility to practice in Texas or an already in-process application to waive in;
- Experience providing excellent legal services to low-income people;
- Commitment to client-centered representation with an eye toward strategy for systemic change;
- A track record of maintaining strong working relationships with a diverse group of stakeholders; and
- A demonstrated interest in social and racial justice.

Preferred Qualifications:
- The ability to counsel clients in Spanish;
- Experience with criminal record clearing work (expunctions and nondisclosures) or criminal defense work;
- Experience using the Clio case management system; and
- Knowledge of the criminal legal system.

Salary commensurate with experience but starts at $50,000 annually plus health and dental insurance. We have an unlimited leave policy that requires a minimum of 10 days off annually, and each person at TFDP has their own professional development budget. Black, Indigenous, and people of color; people who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system; and people from other underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply. This position is grant-funded for one year with a strong possibility for renewal.

To apply, please complete this form, which has space for applicants to upload a PDF containing a cover letter, resume, and a list of three professional references. Peer and colleague references are encouraged. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and accepted until January 31, 2022.