Fall Semester 2023 Internship

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; criminal record clearing (expunctions and nondisclosures); and other issues related to the criminalization of poverty. TFDP is looking for interns who are committed to social justice, especially in the context of criminal justice reform. Potential interns should have strong research, writing, organizational, and communication skills. They should be able to work independently and as a part of a team.

Semester internship opportunities vary depending on the current workloads of TFDP staff attorneys. For Fall 2023, we anticipate that interns will generally be responsible for legal research and writing, factual development, requests of court records, and client interviewing. In addition, interns will work directly with people caught up in the criminal system during our pro bono clinics, which help low-income Texans clear warrants, satisfy fines and costs, reclaim their driver’s licenses, secure early terminations of probation, and clear their criminal records.

There may be other opportunities available such as court observation, reviews of court files and other court data, assistance 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 may 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. 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 staff will give a general idea of the work anticipated for the semester if you are invited for an interview.

We prefer interns who can dedicate a minimum of 10 hours per week of their term to TFDP. Internships can be for credit or not. Interns will have access to the TFDP office in Austin, but remote opportunities are also available. Funding for internships may be available, although we do not offer funding for interns who are receiving credit from their schools for completing an internship.

To apply, please submit a cover letter, resume, and writing sample via this form.