

Attorney Opening Texas Defender Service

Background

Texas Defender Service (TDS) is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of representation afforded to those facing a death sentence and to expose and eradicate the systemic flaws plaguing the Texas death penalty. In addition to providing quality direct representation, TDS tracks death-eligible cases and incarcerated persons with a death-sentence in Texas; trains, consults with, and provides resources to attorneys in capital cases; and provides assistance to capital defense teams, including those whose clients are facing execution dates.

Position Overview

TDS seeks an experienced attorney with sound judgment, outstanding legal skills, and a demonstrated commitment to indigent defense. The attorney will operate as a part of a team of attorneys who represent persons on death row in direct appeals and in state and federal habeas proceedings. They will collaborate with our team of attorneys and mitigation specialists in strategic work to decrease death sentences and improve the quality of capital defense in Texas. The attorney will also consult with, provide resources for, and assist attorneys representing clients in capital trial cases on trial strategy and pretrial litigation.

The ideal candidate for this position is comfortable taking the lead role at hearings in capital cases and has at least five years of trial court or significant evidentiary hearing experience; possesses strong oral, written, research, and investigation skills; has experience in preparing appellate briefs and habeas applications; works well in a team-based environment; is highly organized; has strong networking skills; and works effectively under pressure. The candidate should be knowledgeable about the latest developments in criminal and/or capital habeas law and experienced in developing and litigating capital habeas claims. The ideal candidate is capable of creative and strategic thinking in approaching litigation. This position also involves close collaboration with the larger capital habeas community, which is composed of highly committed and talented lawyers. Given the nature of the work, the successful candidate should expect to work some evenings, weekends and holidays. Travel throughout Texas is required. All applicants must either be admitted, or willing and eligible to seek admission, to the Texas bar. Fluency in Spanish is a plus.

This position may be located in Austin or Houston. Salary will be based on experience.

Interested candidates should electronically submit a cover letter, resume, three references, and a writing sample no later than July 15, 2020, to Jenna Swiargula (jswiargula@texasdefender.org) and Jared Tyler (jptyler@texasdefender.org).

TDS is an equal opportunity employer that values diversity in our organization and we encourage people from historically underrepresented groups in the practice of law to apply. TDS does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law.