

## TEXAS DEFENDER SERVICE YEAR-ROUND INTERNSHIPS

*We are an equal opportunity organization. We welcome qualified applicants of all races, physical abilities, ethnicities, genders, gender identities or expressions, national origins, sexual orientations, creeds, religions, and ages. We also welcome qualified applicants who are pregnant, have veteran status, have a history of union membership or activism, and who have been previously incarcerated or system involved.*

Texas Defender Service (TDS) seeks talented and passionate college, graduate, and law students to join our team as interns during the fall and spring semesters. Our interns play an essential role in helping us further our mission to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the Lone Star State.

We value a diverse, inclusive, and antiracist workforce. We seek to cultivate a community of lawyers, mitigation specialists, policy advocates, and interns whose talents, skills, and personal life experiences help us deeply and creatively engage with the project of unwinding mass incarceration and excessive punishment in Texas. Women, people of color, people with disabilities, people from communities harmed by incarceration and over-policing, people from underrepresented communities, and people who have personal or familial experience with the criminal-legal system are deeply encouraged to apply.

### **Our Mission**

At Texas Defender Service, we fight for the end of mass incarceration and excessive punishment in Texas through direct representation, policy reform, and public education. We stand up for the dignity and humanity of people harmed by mass incarceration, and advocate for a reimagined criminal-legal system that is just, humane, and free from racism and cruelty.

### **History**

Texas Defender Service has led the fight to end the death penalty in the Lone Star State for over twenty-five years. Founded in 1995, Texas Defender Service has argued – and won – five cases before the United States Supreme Court; achieved countless victories for clients who faced the death penalty because of their mental illness, intellectual disability, or race; and won innumerable legislative reforms to protect Texans facing the

death penalty and other extreme punishments. Since 2018 alone, TDS has gotten prosecutors to drop capital charges against 25 of our clients. TDS has driven down new executions – from their startling height of 40 in 2000 – to just a trickle today. In 2022, we expanded our mission to battle other excessive punishments in Texas.

### **Internship Overview**

Internships require a full-time commitment (40 hours a week) or part-time commitment (10-20 hours a week) for at least one complete semester.

Interns contribute to all aspects of our work. Responsibilities vary based on our needs and applicants' background and interests, but may include:

- Performing high-level legal and policy research;
- Drafting legal memos, legal pleadings, and policy papers;
- Creating videos, illustrated stories, and data visualizations that highlight the harms of mass incarceration and excessive punishment;
- Analyzing and collecting data for cases and advocacy projects;
- Producing new content for our social-media pages and working to expand our social-media outreach and presence;
- Carrying out ground-level intensive investigative work and records review;
- Attending local trainings, hearings, trials, and oral arguments;
- Representing clients before the parole board;
- Receiving training on conducting mitigation investigations in capital cases, both in preparation for trial and for post-conviction briefing; and
- Meeting and interviewing incarcerated clients

### **How to Apply**

Applications for the fall semester will be considered August 15-September 15, and applications for the spring semester will be considered December 1-December 15. Please send a complete application package to Randi Chavez ([rchavez@texasdefender.org](mailto:rchavez@texasdefender.org)). A complete application includes:

- cover letter;
- resume;
- transcript;
- writing sample; and
- two references

In your cover letter, please let us know why you are excited to intern at Texas Defender Service and how your talents, skills, and/or personal life experiences will contribute to our mission. If you wish to do so, please also feel free to inform us of the pronouns you would like us to use when referring to you (such as: he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Only complete applications will be considered. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Internships are unpaid.