

Legal Intern Program Nutshell
(www.HarrisCountyAttorney.us)

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Harris County Attorney's Office represents Harris County Texas, its departments, elected and appointed officials, and employees in all civil matters that involve county business. Our office also represents the Harris County Hospital District, the Harris County Flood Control District, the Harris County Appraisal Review Board, and the Greater 911 Emergency Network, which are separate legal entities. Our office also represents the State of Texas in mental health commitments and children's protective services cases and assists Harris County's guardianship program, which cares for elderly and disabled individuals who are unable to care for themselves.

The Office provides a full spectrum of legal services such as state and federal civil litigation, drafting and negotiating contracts, conducting condemnation proceedings, providing legal advice to Harris County officials, issuing County Attorney Opinions, collecting monies owed to Harris County, and preparing documents for bond issues. The office is organized into legal practice areas, including: Compliance (including Labor/Employment and Law Enforcement, Environmental (including Community Protection), Public Law (General Counsel), Hospital District, Litigation (including Special Civil Prosecutions, Appellate, and Eminent Domain), and Protective Services (including child removals and guardianships).

LEGAL INTERN DUTIES

1. Legal interns will complete legal research on issues that arise in real-time. In order for attorneys to better understand the arguments on both sides of an issue, legal authority and arguments must be discussed with the attorneys. Often the work product must also be articulated in a legal memorandum.
2. Duties also include communicating with witnesses and/or client contacts to gather additional information about a matter.
3. Attendance and participation at client meetings will often be required.
4. In the Child Protective Services practice groups, legal interns will help prepare a docket of cases coming up for hearing, accompany attorneys to court, and assist with courtroom activities, such as analyzing prospective jurors. Legal interns with third-year bar cards will actively assist with hearings.
5. In a litigation practice group, duties will also include responding to discovery, drafting motions, and attending depositions and hearings with a supervising attorney.
6. Duties in a transactional practice group may include form drafting and reviewing contractual language.

LEGAL INTERN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. improvement of legal research and writing skills;
2. exposure to a practical application of legal principles;
3. exposure to a "behind the scenes" look at office politics and the daily activities of specific practice areas;
4. development of mentoring relationships, professional references, and the legal intern's professional network;
5. fulfillment of the required number of hours for academic credit externships.

LEGAL INTERN SUPERVISION

1. Work-product will be reviewed by one of the supervising attorneys and evaluated.
2. Recommendations and other feedback will be made where appropriate.
3. The legal intern's overall performance should be discussed and evaluated by all of the supervising personnel at the end of the period. Items to be discussed will include:
 - a. quality and amount of work (including the balance between thoroughness and timeliness);
 - b. attitude and willingness to work, including on-the-job initiative;
 - c. ability to analyze and apply legal authority to questions of law; and
 - d. ability to successfully interact with others (colleagues, clients, court staff, witnesses, etc.).

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Candidate should demonstrate an enthusiasm or passion for Public Interest law. Summer interns should have completed at least 1 year of law school (which preferably would include Legal Research and Writing). In addition, during an in person or Skype interview, the candidate must appear self-motivated and demonstrate both an ability to reason legally and an aptitude for successfully interacting with others. A familiarity with using technology and digital media to communicate and organize tasks would be helpful.

Interns may apply through their law school for any academic credit and/or non-profit organizations (such as the HBA minority opportunities committee) for funding opportunities, such as work-study, fellowships, stipends, or other scholarship programs. Summer interns are normally expected to work a *full-time* (40-hour week) schedule for 10-12 weeks, unless enrolled in summer classes. However, the Office will accept shorter-term and "split summer" commitments in exceptional circumstances.