

Manne Family Legal Fellowship
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 is offering a one-year legal fellowship for recent law school graduates of Columbia Law School with sound judgment, outstanding legal skills, and a demonstrated commitment to indigent defense. The fellow will collaborate with TDS's staff in strategic work and public education efforts to decrease death sentences, improve the quality of capital defense in Texas, and advance systemic change in the Texas criminal justice system. They will also work with a team of attorneys engaged in direct representation of death-sentenced prisoners in Texas on direct appeal and in state and federal habeas proceedings. The fellow may also, along with TDS attorneys and mitigation specialists, 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 possesses strong oral, written, research, and investigation skills; works well in a team-based environment; is highly organized; and works effectively under pressure. Candidates should be capable of creative and strategic thinking in approaching litigation and skilled at both high-level legal research and briefing, as well as ground-level intensive investigative work and records review. Prior experience with indigent or capital defense, including prior experience in offices that develop and litigate appellate and/or habeas claims in capital cases and conduct investigation, and knowledge of the latest developments in criminal, death penalty and/or capital habeas law are preferred. Given the nature of the work, the successful candidate should expect to work some evenings, weekends and holidays. Travel throughout Texas is required. Fluency in Spanish is a plus.

This position may be located in Austin or Houston. Annual compensation for the fellowship is \$50,000.

Interested candidates should electronically submit a cover letter, resume, three references, and a writing sample to Ashlee Wigginton (awigginton@texasdefender.org). Applications will be accepted from November 23, 2021 until December 31, 2021. The fellowship period is from September 2022 to August 2023.

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.