



Public Policy Practicum/Internship

ArchCity Defenders (ACD) is a holistic legal advocacy organization that combats the criminalization of poverty and state violence, especially in communities of color. ACD's foundation of civil and criminal legal representation, social services, impact litigation, policy and media advocacy, and community collaboration achieves and inspires justice and equitable outcomes for people throughout the St. Louis region and beyond.

ArchCity Defenders envisions a society liberated from systems of oppression where the promise of justice and racial equity is realized; communities where our approach to public safety prioritizes investment in well-being, health, and transformation without relying on criminalization and incarceration; and people living freely in their communities, thriving regardless of their race or income.

ArchCity Defenders is working on broad-based change to the St. Louis region's criminal legal system. One way we advance this agenda is through the use of impact litigation. In order to effectively file and argue civil rights impact cases, it is necessary to have extensive knowledge of legal precedents, state and federal statutes, and county and municipal ordinances.

Although impact litigation has become one effective tool for change, ArchCity Defenders remains dedicated to representing our clients and changing the lives of our clients on an individual basis. To this end, we provide direct representation in housing, consumer, criminal, and other areas of the law.

ACD practices a holistic model of representation by combining zealous legal advocacy with an understanding that for most of our clients the legal system is one very small part of their lived experience. Housing and economic insecurity often make it difficult or virtually impossible to resolve legal issues. Social work students serve a pivotal role in providing support, intervention, and advocacy with respect to the underlying causes of these legal matters.

ACD's media and policy advocacy is grounded in our mission and prioritizes:

- centering the challenges ArchCity clients and their families face within a historic and systemic context
- elevating the voices of our clients who have been impacted by systemic racist, social and economic oppression
- maintaining a platform for our clients to speak about their lived experiences

- exposing injustice
- countering the misrepresentation and distortion of poor people and people of color in mainstream media narratives
- impacting community conversation on issues impacting our region
- providing recommendations for direct and systemic change
- re-imagining public safety

ACD's seeks an intern to participate in the advocacy and coalition work of ArchCity Defenders and its community partners through policy research and analysis. This position offers a unique experience for a practicum student or intern as there is a great deal of autonomy within this position. A successful student needs to be assertive, resourceful, independent, persistent, empathetic, proactive, and flexible. They will need to take initiative, see projects through to completion, become a strong advocate for ACD's work and mission, and feel comfortable interacting with clients, staff, organizers, activists, and politicians. Additionally, the internship provides students with an opportunity to become familiar with various aspects of the legal system and the intersection between law and social work.

Responsibilities:

- Track, research, and analyze local, state, and federal policy and issue developments related to the mission and work of ArchCity Defenders
- Assist in local and state-level campaigns related to the mission and work of ArchCity Defenders
- Conduct policy research to aid our local, state, and federal advocacy work
- Conduct policy analysis on bills, rules, regulations, and ordinances
- Draft legislative talking points or communications
- Coordinate meetings with clients, staff, organizers, activists, and/or politicians
- Provide community education regarding mission of ArchCity Defenders
- Follow all ethical standards of NASW Code of Ethics, if applicable
- Perform any other duties as assigned to help the policy program do its best work

Qualifications:

- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite
- Excellent research, writing, analytical, and communication skills
- Comfort and experience with the municipal, state, and federal legislative process, especially with tracking legislation
- Detail-oriented approach to working in a team-driven organization
- High capacity for problem solving and self-direction and the ability to work independently within time constraints
- Flexible and able to respond appropriately to ACD's changing needs
- Commitment to racial and economic justice and systems change

- Cultural awareness and sensitivity toward diverse populations; awareness of structures of power, privilege, and oppression
- Knowledge of homelessness and housing issues and/or the criminal legal system; best practices, particularly around economic gaps and needs; or passion to learn about these issues, systems, and resources

All internships are unpaid, volunteer positions. However, ACD will work with students who secure funding from outside sources or to obtain class credit where available.

ArchCity Defenders is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people who identify with historically underserved or underrepresented communities, people of color, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQIA+, and gender non-conforming applicants. ACD encourages applications from all individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, citizenship, disability, military or veteran status, and record of arrest or conviction.