



Legal Internship

ArchCity Defenders 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.

While continuing to provide holistic legal advocacy to those in St. Louis, ArchCity Defenders is working on broad-based change to the region's criminal legal systems. One way we advance this change is through the use of impact litigation brought by our Civil Rights Litigation team on issues like debtors' prisons, police misconduct, cash bail, and jail conditions. This litigation is primarily federal Section 1983 litigation, both class actions and individual.

While impact litigation has become an effective tool for change, ArchCity Defenders remains dedicated to changing our clients' lives through individual representation. To this end, our Direct Representation teams represent clients in the following legal practice areas, among others: housing, consumer, criminal, and municipal. Our Direct Representation work is spread across two separate teams: one focusing on housing & civil advocacy and another focusing on providing defense in criminal and municipal proceedings. Both teams' work helps to inform the work of the Civil Rights team.

The Housing & Civil Advocacy team provides representation to tenants and those experiencing homelessness in St. Louis, represents clients in expungement proceedings, and handles various other civil matters in Missouri's state courts. This team primarily practices in Missouri's civil courts, but occasionally appears in criminal, municipal, and federal courts.

The Criminal & Municipal Defense team provides direct defense representation for those facing criminal and municipal ordinance violation charges throughout the St. Louis region. This team appears in over 80 municipal and state courts.

Legal intern applicants select the team they prefer to work with but will have somewhat similar internship experiences across the board. However, an intern seeking more individual client contact will likely prefer to work with the direct representation team. An intern seeking federal court experience or lengthier motion drafting experience would likely prefer to work with the Civil Rights team.

All legal interns will perform fact and legal research to bolster our understanding of claims and issues; draft memos synthesizing findings as well as motions, pleadings, and other legal documents; assist with discovery and investigation; and interview and communicate with clients or class members. To the extent there are court hearings taking place during the internship hours, interns are encouraged to attend court proceedings with staff attorneys.

Legal interns function as a part of an interdisciplinary team and coordinate with attorneys and staff to support ArchCity Defenders' mission and expand our reach. A successful intern needs to be assertive, independent, persistent, empathetic, proactive, flexible, and self-directed. They will need to take initiative, use problem-solving skills, see projects through to completion, and become a strong advocate for themselves and others.

Undergraduate students participating in legal internships will not receive the same types of assignments as law students. The intern will be able to engage in some research and drafting but will spend more time on discovery, document review, investigation, and administrative work. Undergraduate students are also encouraged to attend and observe court proceedings with staff attorneys. Please note that we are only able to host 2-3 undergraduate legal interns each term.

Qualifications:

- Ability to relocate to St. Louis for the duration of the summer internship
- Excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent legal research and writing skills
- 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

Please visit our application links on our [Internships page](#) to obtain more information about internship requirements, application instructions, and application deadlines.

ArchCity Defenders is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQIA+, and gender non-conforming applicants.