

Internship Program at the Civil Rights Justice Center

The Civil Rights Justice Center, PLLC offers internships for students invested in analyzing and problem-solving key civil rights violations. CJRC interns work with staff to develop strategic and innovative solutions in cases ranging from disability and employment law to police misconduct and injustice in prison facilities.



On their first day, interns Brennan and Leah (*pictured left*) were introduced to the firm and civil rights law through an orientation and a case briefing assignment. Thereafter, they worked directly on cases under the supervision of attorney Darryl Parker and one of his legal assistants. Like many interns, Brennan and Leah are undergraduate students receiving class credit from their respective universities. Although many interns have hopes of pursuing a career in law, students with diverse interests, including a current intern majoring in bio-engineering,

immerse themselves in social justice work.

Each intern is assigned to three or four active cases which they delve into deeply and which present opportunities for them to think and write like a lawyer. Consequently, CRJC interns learn the intricacies of the judicial system which they must navigate as they work each case from its early stages and the initial complaint through the discovery process, and on through alternative dispute resolution and trial preparation.

To further cultivate an environment conducive to learning, CRJC interns have the flexibility to focus on areas of the law specific to their interests. Those interested in research, community outreach, and enrichment can take on different projects which later can be published in CRJC newsletters, articles and Know Your Rights pamphlets. Those curious about litigation can narrow their focus in helping to initiate and prepare civil lawsuits which, for many students, is their first encounter with drafting complaints, preparing for deposition, and drafting jury instructions.

The primary goal of the internship program is to provide an accelerated learning platform where students can maximize their internship experience. A small law firm affords students the ability to do substantial and meaningful work. CJRC interns work with clients who may not have ready access to legal aid and/or are faced with complex cases. Their assignments require them to confront the particular injustices that each individual has experienced. Students are continuously working to develop substantive solutions to constitutional violations. Through their work in prison litigation or on cases where clients allege excessive use of force or employment discrimination, students will receive a practical and legal education that will have an immediate impact on their lives while enabling them to learn and grow skills that new lawyers typically develop much later in their careers.