HARRIS COUNTY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
LEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
FAQs for Prospective Interns

1. Tell me more about the Harris County Attorney’s Office.

The Harris County Attorney’s Office represents the County, 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: Children’s Protective Services, Compliance, Disability & Elder Law, Environmental, General Counsel, Hospital District, Litigation, and Real Estate.

2. Describe each practice group.

**Children’s Protective Services**
- Represents the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, protecting abused and neglected children in Harris County, and protecting sexually abused children through the Children’s Assessment Center.

**Compliance**
- Specializes in collecting liens, fines, taxes, judgments, and other monies owed to Harris County as well as enforcing certain laws protecting Harris County neighborhoods and communities.

**Disability and Elder Law**
- Represents the Harris County Guardianship Program and the State of Texas in mental health commitment proceedings.

**General Counsel**
- Provides general legal services and advice to the County’s elected and appointed officials and their employees. Covers a wide range of issues related to the medical examiner, emergency management services, law enforcement, public works, community services, road and building construction, park site planning and development, contracting drafting and negotiating, and inter-local agreements with other governmental jurisdictions.
Hospital District
- Provides general civil legal representation for the Harris County Hospital District and Community Health Choice, Inc., a health maintenance organization owned and operated by the District.

Environmental
- Specializes in the enforcement of environmental laws and County development regulations. Represents the public’s interest by opposing environmental permits if the issuance of the permit would be detrimental to public health.

Litigation
- Represents Harris County and other county entities, as well as county officials and employees in a wide variety of general civil litigation filed in state and federal courts. Defends lawsuits filed against Harris County by individuals who allege their civil rights have been violated. Handles all legal matters regarding the County’s acquisitions and sales of real property through the power of eminent domain, declaratory judgments and inverse condemnations. Represents Harris County in civil service commissions, labor arbitrations, and other administrative proceedings involving employment claims.

3. Do interns get paid?

It depends on a number of factors. We have paid interns in the past. We highly encourage candidates to pursue academic credit or fellowship or apply for work-study through their law school. We do not accept unpaid volunteers.

4. Does your Office work with any other legal programs?

Our Office also participates in the HBA Diversity and Inclusion Program, which is open to first-year students from all ethnic backgrounds. We are open to expanding our partnerships with other legal programs.

5. Do you accept undergraduate college or high school students?

We only accept undergraduate college students through the University of Houston Law Center Pre-Law Pipeline Program (UHLC Pipeline Program) and high school graduating seniors and/or undergraduate college students though Harris County Precinct One’s Leadership Experience & Employment Program (L.E.E. Program).

6. How do I apply for the internship program?

Please email all of the following documentation to: Internships@cao.hctx.net
1. Cover Letter
i. Using the Practice Group options below, list up to three practice groups with which you would like to intern and/or state that you have no practice group preference:
Children’s Protective Services, Compliance, Disability & Elder Law, Environmental, General Counsel, Hospital District, Real Estate, and Litigation.
ii. The days and hours you are committed to working at HCAO
iii. For summer applicants: state if you would like to work 6 weeks or 12 weeks (indicate first or second session)

2. Resume
3. Unofficial Transcript
4. Legal Writing Sample (5-10 pages)
5. One-page letter addressed to Vince Ryan on the topic of “What does Public Service mean to you?”
6. Completed Background Check Authorization form (can be found online on the Harris County Attorney’s Office Internships webpage)

7. Will there be an interview?

Most practice groups will require at least one additional screening process, e.g., in-person or phone interview.

8. What is the application deadline?

- Our spring internship program applications are due November 1.
- Our summer internship program applications are due March 1.
- Our fall internship program applications are due July 1.

9. How long is the internship program?

These dates are subject to change and we will accommodate the number of hours needed for academic credit.
- The summer program runs for 12-weeks beginning in mid-May and ending in mid-August. We do accept interns who want to work for a six week summer session.
- The fall program runs for 12-weeks and typically begins in mid-August and concludes at the end of November.
- The spring program runs for 12-weeks and typically begins in mid-January and concludes at the end of April.

10. How flexible are the dates and times?

Our Office is open 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. We are very flexible during the school year to accommodate for class schedules. For the summer, the individual start and end dates may be negotiated between the intern and the practice group manager.

11. How many positions are available in each practice group?
The number of positions will vary by a number of different factors. Some practice groups are larger and can accommodate more interns.

12. Will I get to choose the practice group to which I want to be assigned?

We are normally able to accommodate a candidate’s three practice group preferences. If you are chosen by more than one practice group, you will be contacted and asked to chose which practice group you would like to intern with.

13. If I interned for the Harris County Attorney’s Office previously, do I need to apply again?

Yes, you should email your request to Internships@cao.hctx.net and we will let you know if any updated information is required.

14. When will I hear if I have been accepted for the internship program or not?

It usually takes about one to two months for managers to review resumes, interview candidates and conduct background checks. You will receive notice if you were not selected to participate in the program.

15. What is the citizenship requirement to intern at the Office?

You do not have to be a U.S. Citizen; however, you must provide a valid passport.

If you don’t see the answer to your question here, please e-mailInternships@cao.hctx.net