TEXAS DEFENDER SERVICE
2027-2028 MANNE FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

We are an equal opportunity organization. We welcome qualified applicants of all races, physical abilities, ethnicities, genders, gender identities or expressions, national origins, sexual orientations, creeds, religions, and ages. We also welcome qualified applicants who are pregnant, have veteran status, have a history of union membership or activism, and who have been previously incarcerated or system involved.

Texas Defender Service (TDS) is proud to offer an exciting one-year fellowship, beginning in fall 2027, for a recent law-school graduate. We welcome applications from all eligible candidates, with particular consideration given to graduates of the University of Texas School of Law, Harvard Law School, or Columbia Law School.

Generously funded by Neal Manne and Nancy McGregor Manne—longtime Texas-based lawyers with a deep passion for social justice—this fellowship will give a recent law student the opportunity to help us further our mission to end mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the Lone Star State.

We value a diverse, inclusive, and antiracist workforce. We seek to cultivate a community of lawyers, mitigation specialists, policy advocates, fellows, and interns whose talents, skills, and personal life experiences help us deeply and creatively engage with the project of unwinding mass incarceration and excessive punishment in Texas. Women, people of color, people with disabilities, people from communities harmed by incarceration and over-policing, people from underrepresented communities, and people who have personal or familial experience with the criminal-legal system are deeply encouraged to apply.

Our Mission

At Texas Defender Service, we fight for the end of mass incarceration and excessive punishment in Texas through direct representation, policy reform, and public education. We stand up for the dignity and humanity of people harmed by mass incarceration, and advocate for a reimagined legal system that is just, humane, and free from racism and cruelty.

History

Texas Defender Service has led the fight to end the death penalty in the Lone Star State for over twenty-five years. Founded in 1995, Texas Defender Service has argued –

and won – five cases before the United States Supreme Court; achieved countless victories for clients who faced the death penalty because of their mental illness, intellectual disability, or race; and won innumerable legislative reforms to protect Texans facing the death penalty and other extreme punishments. Since 2018 alone, TDS has gotten prosecutors to drop capital charges against 25 of our clients. TDS has driven down new executions – from their startling height of 40 in 2000 – to just a trickle today. In 2022, we expanded our mission to battle other excessive punishments in Texas.

Fellowship Overview

The location of this fellowship is Austin, Texas. The one-year fellowship salary is $65,000, plus our generous benefits package.

The ideal candidate for this position will show a deep commitment to social justice and criminal-legal reform. They will possess strong oral, written, research, and investigation skills; work well in a team-based environment while remaining comfortable handling individual responsibilities; be highly organized; and work effectively under pressure. Candidates should also bring creative and strategic thinking to litigation and be skilled at both high-level legal research and briefing. Familiarity with investigative work and records review is preferred.

Prior experience with indigent or capital defense—including trial-level work or experience in offices that investigate, develop and litigate appellate and/or habeas claims—is a plus. Given the nature of the work, the successful candidate should expect to work some evenings, weekends and holidays. Travel throughout Texas is required. Spanish fluency is valued.

How to Apply

Please send a complete application package to Hana at hbelmonte-ryu@texasdefender.org. A complete application includes:

- cover letter;
- resume;
- law school transcript;
- writing sample; and
- three references

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.