



## **Migrant Center for Human Rights**

### **Protecting the Persecuted**

#### **INTERNSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT**

TERM: 2 days / week for 25 weeks (six-months part-time)

STIPEND: \$500 (\$10 / day stipend to cover transportation and/or lunch expenses)

LOCATION: Southtown Mennonite Church (remote work may be possible)

#### **ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP**

This internship is supported by an educational grant from Rotary to provide an on-the-job mentorship opportunity to a college student. This position is for a young professional looking to develop their portfolio of expertise. We expect this to be an important career development opportunity for the chosen candidate. Specifically, the intern will gain an invaluable one-on-one educational opportunity in the real-world application and development of job skills necessary to be successful in the non-profit profession. Too often students struggle to find job opportunities if they have not already successfully completed a relevant position -- the infamous catch 22 -- and too often are low-income students precluded from working in the non-profit sector because they cannot afford to take unpaid positions and non-profits do not have the financial ability to bring them onboard without these scholarships. This project scholarship is split between the student and the organization to cover the transportation / lunch costs on the student's side and the program mentorship / training / educational costs on the organization's side. Instead of paying for college tuition this educational grant / scholarship will be paid by Rotary and will give the selected student the ability to gain real-world professional experience. This is an opportunity to experience first-hand how non-profit organizations work, gain insight into possible career paths, develop important job skills like time management and persuasive writing, and serve their communities.

#### **ABOUT THE MIGRANT CENTER**

The Migrant Center was started by four immigration attorneys in 2017 to address this disparity in access to justice, knowing that legal information and services is crucial to ensuring a fair day in court. "The evidence shows that having an attorney continued to be almost a necessity for winning asylum in Immigration Court." TRAC, Continued Rise in Asylum Denial Rates: Impact of Representation and Nationality. Asylum seekers with legal representation have been shown to receive protection about 50% of the time, whereas those left to go up against trained government prosecutors alone only receive protection about 10% of the time. Access to legal counsel for detained individuals in the San Antonio area is about 33%, whereas those outside detention obtain counsel about 66% of the time. Our mission derives from our core value of supporting our Constitution's due process guarantees.



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**Mission Statement (What We Do):** We work to advance the human rights of all migrants by increasing legal knowledge and access to legal services.

We carry out our mission by providing free and low-cost legal services to detained, low-income immigrants facing removal from the United States at the third largest adult detention center in the U.S.: the South Texas Detention Complex located 65 miles southwest of San Antonio in Pearsall, Texas (bed capacity: 1900).

We support all immigrants regardless of nationality, race / ethnicity / tribe, religion, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation / gender identity, or age.

**Vision Statement (What We Hope for the World):** We envision a world where all detained migrants have access to the legal knowledge and legal services necessary to protect and fully exercise their human rights.

[R]ecognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

– Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Key Human Rights We Work to Protect:** We work to ensure every migrant's rights are recognized and respected, both by helping them flee situations of persecution and by helping them access their rights here in the United States. These include:

The right to seek asylum

The right to life

The right to liberty and security, including freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention

The right to be free from torture, including the right to humane conditions of detention

such as appropriate medical care and nutrition The right to due process before a

competent, independent, and impartial tribunal, including the right to the presumption of

innocence The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom of assembly and association

The right to take part in the government of one's country

The right to marry and found a family

The right to choose one's employment and work in just conditions

The right to be treated equally

**Core Values:** We strive to incorporate the following core values into all of our actions and decision-making:



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- Integrity
- Empathy
- Transparency

How We Carry Out Our Work: The Migrant Center for Human Rights is a Texas nonprofit legal service organization providing free and low-cost legal services to men and women from around the world who are detained in immigration custody in the San Antonio area. Specifically, we provide legal information, assistance, and representation in Immigration Court, the Board of Immigration Appeals, the Fifth Circuit, ICE, and USCIS. We also submit requests for release from detention (parole, bond, and habeas corpus) and advocate on access to counsel issues, such as helping reunify split families and finding ways for non-English speakers to consult with and work with an attorney (language access). We work to:

- Protect and promote immigrants' due process rights and other human rights
- Cultivate and expand attorney and volunteer engagement
- Educate the public about immigration issues and amplify immigrants' voices
- Hold the U.S. government accountable for upholding immigrants' human rights

We use four methods to carry out our work:

Human Rights Learning  
Legal Services  
Community Engagement  
Public Policy Advocacy

Programs and Projects:

Asylum: We represent people from around the world in their search for protection in the United States. For those we don't have the capacity to represent, we also provide support in the following areas:

- Preparing for asylum interviews
- Filling out applications for protection and writing declarations
- Searching for human rights reports on conditions in their home country -
- Preparing to present testimony in court
- Understanding denials and writing appeals

Unjustified Detention: We help people get released from immigrant detention centers through bond and parole requests, habeas corpus petitions and other federal litigation.

Access to Counsel: We advocate for access to legal representation regardless of ability to pay. Specifically, we help with:



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- Language access for non-English speakers
- Reunification of families separated by the U.S. government

Most detained immigrants without the means of hiring legal counsel are asylum seekers arriving at our border for the first time. We have served over 700 immigrants in the last three years.

We also serve the American community in providing information based on our on-the-ground experience working with immigrants, both about the impact of policies and procedures through legal analysis and by providing a forum for immigrants to tell their stories directly to the public. We send out regular updates to our listserv of over 1,200 community members from San Antonio and around the country.

#### **ABOUT THE POSITION**

The intern will focus on bringing information, events, and activism opportunities to the San Antonio community through developing content for our newsletter, hosting events such as film screenings, poetry readings, and panel discussions, and communicating with people about volunteer opportunities. The intern will help the Migrant Center amplify our outreach and ability to serve as a resource for the community on important immigration issues. The intern should leave this position knowing how to be a more effective and creative advocate for change.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS**

- Interest in immigration issues
- Advanced conversation and empathy skills for working with trauma survivors
- Creativity and problem solving abilities
- Advanced analytical skills
- High attention to detail
- Good public speaking skills
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to follow instructions and absorb feedback
- Professionalism in dress, manner, and approach (ability to follow office policies)
- Basic technological skills including familiarity with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), Google platforms (calendars, chat, docs, etc); Mailchimp and Zoom desirable or willingness to learn
- Authorized to work in the U.S.
- Non-English language proficiencies are a plus



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#### **EVALUATION**

The intern's performance – and recommendation letter – will be based on the following specifics, in addition to the above:

- Creativity in brainstorming the best ways of engaging with the community and professionalism in responding to requests for information from the community.
- Planning and hosting one event each month (dependent on COVID for type and location).
- Preparing at least one major newsletter produced each month for our 1,200 subscribers, including important news updates (requires information synthesis skills to glean the most relevant and trust-worthy data from the plethora of information that is flooding the internet) and an interview with an immigrant on their experience going through our immigration system (requires trauma-sensitive interviewing and editing skills).
- Sending out one other community engagement email per month.
- Growing the listserv and volunteer database.
- Attending and professionally representing the organization at community events.
- Completing other projects as assigned.

There will be weekly check-in mentorship meetings, an evaluation at 1 month, 3 months, 5 months, and 6 months. Intern feedback and evaluation forms and discussion follow similar processes as local universities for their for-credit externship programs.

#### **HOW TO APPLY**

Send the following materials in the following order to [sara.ramey@migrantcenter.org](mailto:sara.ramey@migrantcenter.org) with “Rotary Internship Application” as the subject line:

1. Cover Letter
2. Resume
3. Writing Sample
4. Three references

If you have not heard from us within a week please feel free to follow up.