

# **Migrant Center for Human Rights**

## **Protecting the Persecuted**

### **PARALEGAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

TERM: 10 hours / week for 3 months (with possibility of extension / increase in hours)

STIPEND: \$30,000 / year

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

### ABOUT THE MIGRANT CENTER

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.

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.

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

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:

- 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

- High attention to detail
- 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
- Interest in immigration issues
- Advanced conversation and empathy skills for working with trauma survivors
- Creativity and problem solving abilities
- Authorized to work in the U.S.
- Non-English language proficiency / fluency is a plus

## EVALUATION

There will be weekly check-in meetings, the paralegal's performance will be based on an evaluation at 1 month and 3 months. Feedback and evaluation forms will be provided. The hope is that this position will increase to 20 hours a week and will become permanent, based on funding.

## HOW TO APPLY

Please send the following materials in the following order to [sara.ramey@migrantcenter.org](mailto:sara.ramey@migrantcenter.org) with "Paralegal Application" as the subject line:

1. Cover Letter
2. Resume
3. Three references

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