

Phoenix Law Department
Civil Division Externship Program

1.0 Overview of Program

The City of Phoenix's Law Department, Civil Division, offers 1-3 unpaid educational externship positions for law students each semester (spring, summer, and fall) as work demands allow, and based on applications. These offers are made to the best qualified candidates by the Civil Division's Externship Committee, after conducting interviews of the preferred applicants selected (based on merit) from the pool of students who submitted cover letters, résumés, transcripts, and writing samples. Offers for summer and fall externs are generally made in February/March and offers for spring candidates are made in October/November.

These positions provide a practical component to classroom instruction by providing externs with experience in a legal setting. Through externships, students are afforded the opportunity to improve relevant legal skills/competencies (such as research, writing, analysis, negotiation, and client communication) and to increase their knowledge of municipal law/associated legal areas.

The Civil Division Externship Committee will assign attorneys, on a voluntary basis, to serve as supervisors and mentors ("**Attorney Leads**" or "**Leads**") to externs. Attorney Leads will provide opportunities for extern performance and evaluation (with routine/frequent feedback) and educate externs about professionalism, substantive law, and ethics. Leads must be in good standing with the Arizona Bar, with at least five years of continuous experience and no disciplinary action.

Students may seek educational credit through their law schools for their externships (generally 1 credit hour for every 55 hours worked). In those cases, externs must complete (and document) the requisite number of hours worked, and Attorney Leads must complete and submit their mid-term and final evaluations.

2.0 Preparation for Extern

The Civil Division Externship Committee must prepare for the externs' arrival, coordinating each extern's background check, badging, office space, and computer access with staff. Attorney Leads will contact their respective externs to confirm their start date and prepare their initial assignments. Other attorneys may be enlisted by Lead to find interesting extern assignments. Leads should also plan observation opportunities for externs to observe lawyering tasks and client interactions (such as meetings, proceedings, negotiations, and field trips as appropriate). The Externship Committee will inform the City Attorney of all extern hiring and start dates.

3.0 Arrival of Extern

On the first day, Attorney Leads will meet with their externs and introduce them to other employees and show them their designated office space. Leads will: explain the Law Department's purpose and structure; discuss expectations and communication channels for

that extern (and exchange contact information); and speak to other protocols, such as dress code, punctuality, security, safety, and computer/phone use. And Leads will assist in picking up an extern badge for City Hall access and discounted parking pass, if needed.

Attorney Leads will also communicate with their externs about goals/assignments and help balance the workload. Leads should make assignments clear by providing sufficient background, suggesting reference materials, specifying the desired form for the finished product, and setting realistic deadlines.

Externs will be expected to sign an externship placement agreement, which covers topics such as: the nature/term of externship, participation without pay/benefits, release of liability, and confidentiality/data security. Attorney Lead will seek a countersignature by the City Attorney and provide the extern with an executed copy.

4.0 Development of Extern

Externs should be assigned substantive legal/policy work that develops a variety of legal skills and experience (such as counseling, negotiation, fact development/analysis, document drafting, and legal work management/organization). The externship should develop the concepts underlying the professional skills taught, providing opportunities for performance and self-evaluation.

Attorney Leads should encourage growth in extern competencies, building on their existing knowledge of substantive/procedural law and their ability to perform legal analysis, conduct legal research, solve problems, communicate effectively, and understand professional/ethical responsibilities. And Leads should provide accurate, specific, and timely feedback to their externs frequently and routinely, meeting with their externs at least once per week.

For externs seeking credit hours, their Attorney Lead must complete a mid-term and final evaluation, discussing both with the extern prior to their submission.

5.0 Continued Mentorship

Under the City's Small Business Entrepreneurial Protégé Program, the Equal Opportunity Department has established objectives for guidance of mentees (such as externs) into the business world, helping them to set and achieve professional goals through advice and encouragement. During and beyond the externship, Attorney Leads should serve as mentors to their externs, supporting their learning and development as they move through law school into legal careers. These students may need mentor advice regarding legal coursework/writing, class selection, bar examination preparation, fields of work/law, and job/internship applications (cover letters/résumés). Regular follow-up with former externs by their Leads is suggested.