



Office of the City Attorney

CRIMINAL DIVISION LEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FACT AND INFORMATION SHEET

The City Attorney's Criminal Division prosecutes criminal misdemeanors and infractions committed within the City of San Diego through five units: the General Trial Unit, the Special Prosecutions Unit, the Domestic Violence & Sex Crimes Unit, the Case Issuance Unit, and the Appellate Unit. The Community Justice Division prosecutes quality of life cases and manages the Community Justice Initiative and collaborative courts program. The Division also aggressively enforces public nuisance, land use, and environmental laws through the Nuisance Abatement Unit.

The Office of the City Attorney, Criminal and Community Justice Divisions, offers volunteer internships for current law school students and recent law school graduates (post-bar). Volunteers do not receive compensation or benefits. There are three internship sessions each calendar year: spring, summer, and fall post-bar.

Volunteer interns will gain valuable experience in legal research, writing, pretrial motion advocacy, and trial preparation under the direct supervision of a Deputy City Attorney. This opportunity includes conferring with witnesses and victims, first-chairing motions, and evidentiary hearings, as well as second-chairing jury trials.

Interns will receive mentorship from experienced prosecutors, exposure to criminal cases, and comprehensive training for a career in prosecution. They will also learn about rehabilitative and restorative justice programs that assist the homeless and those struggling with addiction. Interns are assigned an attorney for mentoring and professional support, along with an intern coordinator to offer further guidance throughout their experience.

These unpaid volunteer positions provide unique opportunities for hands-on legal experience while working alongside practicing attorneys. The Criminal Division offers internships for academic credit or as volunteer positions. Typical duties include conducting legal research, drafting legal documents, conferring with victims about restitution, reviewing body-worn camera footage and taking detailed notes to assist with trial preparation, managing discovery, arguing briefs and motions, and possibly conducting portions of misdemeanor jury trials.

Certified legal interns may have opportunities to make court appearances during the internship including second-chairing jury trials, arguing motions, and conducting evidentiary hearings. All work is completed under the direct supervision of a deputy city attorney. Students must be certified by the California State Bar as a certified legal intern through the Practical Training of Law Students (PTLS) program. Information about this program can be found here: [Practical Training of Law Students](#).

Qualified candidates should have strong legal research, writing, and oral advocacy skills. Passion for criminal law, public service and justice, and the ability to work under pressure in a fast-paced environment is highly desired.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students should apply through their law school’s career services department and participate in on-campus interviews. Students from law schools that do not offer on-campus interviews may submit their application to cityattyminternprog@sandiego.gov. Please submit a letter of interest, a current resume, a copy of a recent law school transcript (unofficial copy is acceptable), and a brief writing sample (maximum of 10 pages). In the cover letter, please indicate the program session for which you are applying: spring, summer, or fall. For students interested in post-bar positions, please review the additional post-bar recruitment information.

Spring interns are required to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours a week (excluding lunch breaks) for at least 10-12 weeks. For the summer session, interns are required to volunteer approximately 35-40 hours per week. Regular office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The internship will be in person.

For the post-bar spring and fall session, interns are required to volunteer approximately 35-40 hours per week. The post-bar positions start in August or March (approximately two weeks after taking the California Bar Exam). Post-bar candidates invited to interview will receive a mock fact pattern and written instructions for the oral presentation of the interview. Post-bars are encouraged to apply for a Deputy City Attorney position during open recruitment (which usually begins in April and September).

Internships must be completed during the session dates specified below. Interns must attend a mandatory orientation session.

Session	Session Dates	Mandatory Orientation	Application Deadline/*Window
Summer 2025	May 19, 2025 – August 1, 2025	May 19, 2025 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	February 7, 2025 5:00 p.m.
Fall Post-Bar 2025	August 18, 2025 – November 7, 2025	August 18, 2025 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	*March 7, 2025, to March 17, 2025 5:00 p.m.
Spring 2026	January 12, 2026 – March 27, 2026	January 12, 2026 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	*July 1, 2025, to October 3, 2025 5:00 p.m.
Spring Post-Bar 2026	March 10, 2026 – May 2, 2026	March 10, 2026 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	*September 1, 2025, to December 5, 2025 5:00 p.m.
Summer 2026	May 18, 2026 – July 31, 2026	May 18, 2026 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	February 13, 2026 5:00 p.m.

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Office of the City Attorney,
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