



Texas Apprenticeship Network for Law School Graduates to Expand to a State-wide Program

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Fort Worth, TX, May 24, 2018 – In 2016 Texas A&M University School of Law launched the Texas Apprenticeship Network, the first Texas incubator-type program for law graduates dedicated to solo practice representing modest-means clients. This program for A&M law students was supported with a \$25,000 grant from the Texas Bar Foundation. Two years later, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded a \$25,000 grant to expand the program to offer apprenticeship opportunities to graduates of law schools throughout Texas.

Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$18 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's largest charitably funded bar foundation.

The Texas Apprenticeship Program was designed to help bridge the justice gap between recent graduates seeking to pursue solo practice and modest-means clients who often are left without representation. To train and support the recent graduates, the program has matched recent law graduates with practitioners who share the common goal of helping address the state's growing need for attorneys to assist pro bono and modest-means clients. The recent graduates, as apprentices, work in the offices of solo and small-firm attorneys who mentor the apprentices in communities and areas of interest in which the apprentices want to work after admission to law practice. Through this process, the apprentices obtain experience while learning about practice management. The mentors also commit themselves to connecting the apprentices in the community.

Professor Susan Fortney, the organizer of the program, stated that the Texas Apprenticeship Network promises to provide high impact at a relatively low cost. "Instead of sending graduates into the profession and trusting that healthy mentorships will develop organically, we're formally teaming graduates with practice leaders."

Fortney explained the inspiration for the program. "Above all, we hope that the apprenticeship prepares and inspires the new attorneys to learn how to practice law ethically and provide both pro bono and affordable legal services to clients who cannot afford market rates."

Professor Fortney noted that the generous support from the Texas Bar Foundation reflects how bar leaders recognize the value of programs that provide legal services to modest-means individuals throughout Texas. With such assistance, these individuals may avoid falling into the justice gap.

Texas A&M University School of Law supports numerous experiential learning initiatives, including the Texas Apprenticeship Network. In addition to providing administrative and personnel assistance, Texas A&M University matched the Texas Bar Foundation grant.

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