

Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (TIRC) - Call for Legal Externs

The Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission (TIRC) is seeking 2L and 3L students interested in investigating claims of torture used to elicit criminal confessions.

TIRC was established by the Illinois Legislature in 2009, in response to findings that the Chicago Police Department (and former Commander Jon Burge) tortured suspects to obtain confessions. TIRC Staff investigates each claim of torture to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of torture to merit judicial review. If TIRC's investigation finds sufficient evidence of torture, the Commission refers the claim to court to hold an evidentiary hearing on whether the confession was the product of torture, and may grant a new trial, vacate the sentence, or even issue a certificate of innocence where appropriate. If TIRC's investigation finds that the claim of torture is not credible, and the confession was obtained legally, it is also committed to denying meritless claims.

TIRC is the only agency of its kind in the country, providing what is often the last avenue for relief for those who may have been wrongfully convicted as a result of torture. TIRC's work also plays a vital role in helping to repair and restore public trust in the criminal justice system. This is a unique opportunity to gain experience in human rights law, as well as obtaining discovery, conducting interviews, and providing legal analysis to the Commission that will be relied upon to determine the outcome of the claim.

Interns/Externs are unpaid. However, TIRC will support students seeking academic credit and/or funding from their law schools or outside programs as available.

Remote Work/Hybrid Option:

To make our internships accessible to all students regardless of geographic location, law student interns can work entirely remotely. TIRC's office is located at 555 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60661, and a hybrid option may be available upon request.

Law Student Opportunities:

Students will be asked to investigate one of our claims to determine whether torture was used to obtain a confession that led to a criminal conviction. Based on your investigation, you'll draft a recommended disposition of the claim for the Commission. Under the supervision of a licensed attorney, students will gain a broad range of experience, including but not limited to:

- Conducting investigations and drafting subpoenas;
- Reviewing and analyzing police, medical, and court records;
- Interviewing Claimants and witnesses;
- Preparing written memoranda and drafting the recommendation for the Commission;
- Legal research and analysis.

Qualifications:

- Currently enrolled in law school;
- Ability to commit to 8+ hours a week (ideally for 2 consecutive semesters);
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team;
- Familiarity with criminal law and/or evidence law is preferred, but not required;
- Ability to relate to and work with low-income clients with histories of trauma is a plus.

Required Resources:

Given the remote nature of this internship, all interns must also have access to:

- A laptop or computer;
- Reliable internet;

How to Apply:

To apply, please send an email to LaWanna Carter (LaWanna.Carter@illinois.gov) the following (with “Law Student Externship” in the subject line):

1. Cover letter indicating your interest in the position, and whether you are interested in starting in Summer 2025 or Fall 2025. Please describe what experiences, personal or professional, have motivated you to apply.
2. Resume

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until our spots are filled.

Review any deadlines your law school may have for enrolling in externships for credit and/or program funding to ensure you submit materials on time.

Non- Discrimination Policy

TIRC is committed to the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunity, pursuant to ABA Standard 205(d). TIRC will observe the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital or military status in regard to hiring, promotion, retention, and conditions of employment.