OFFICE OF CRIMINAL CONFLICT AND CIVIL REGIONAL COUNSEL

SECOND REGION

INTERN PROGRAM POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The Office of Criminal Conflict and Civil Regional Counsel, Second Region ("RC2") supports internship opportunities for students interested in public service, criminal defense, dependency practice, civil litigation, and the operation of Florida's court system.

The internship program is intended to provide meaningful educational and professional experience while supporting the mission of RC2. Internships are educational opportunities and are not intended to replace or substitute for regular agency employees.

II. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

RC2 internships are **unpaid** and are generally offered on a **semester basis**.

For purposes of this policy, internship terms are:

- Fall Semester
- Spring Semester
- Summer Semester

An internship normally begins and ends within the applicable academic semester. Continued participation beyond one semester is not automatic and requires approval for an additional internship term based upon agency need, student performance, available supervision, and space.

Internships may be completed for academic credit when authorized by the student's educational institution. RC2 does not guarantee that an internship will qualify for academic credit. Students are responsible for determining and completing their school's requirements.

III. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION PRIORITY

Internship opportunities may be available to:

1. Law students enrolled in an accredited law school;
2. Undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in an accredited college or university; and
3. Students participating in an approved educational, clinical, externship, or similar academic program.

Because of the legal nature of RC2's work, **law students will receive priority in internship selection and placement**.

When internship capacity is limited, preference may also be given based upon:

- Relevance of the student's academic program to the work of RC2;
- Demonstrated interest in criminal defense, dependency law, public service, or indigent representation;
- Academic standing and relevant coursework;
- Research, writing, communication, and organizational skills;
- Availability during normal agency working hours;
- Ability to satisfy the time commitment requested by the supervising office or attorney; and
- The operational needs of RC2.

Acceptance into the internship program is discretionary. Submission of an application does not guarantee placement.

IV. CERTIFIED LEGAL INTERNS

A law student seeking to perform duties as a **Certified Legal Intern (CLI)** must satisfy all eligibility, certification, law-school sponsorship, and supervision requirements established by Chapter 11 of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar and any other applicable Florida Supreme Court requirements.

Certification must be completed and verified before the student may perform any activity requiring CLI status.

Certified Legal Interns may perform authorized legal activities only:

- Within the limits of their certification;
- Under the supervision of an attorney authorized to supervise a CLI;
- With all required client, court, and law-school approvals; and
- In accordance with the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar.

Participation in the RC2 internship program does not by itself qualify or certify a student as a CLI.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants may be required to provide:

- A résumé;
- A brief cover letter or statement of interest;
- Current school and program information;
- Anticipated graduation date;
- Availability for the requested semester;
- An unofficial or official transcript, when requested;
- A writing sample, particularly for law-student applicants; and
- Documentation required by the student's educational institution if academic credit is requested.

Additional information may be required depending upon the proposed assignment.

Applicants may be interviewed before placement.

VI. PLACEMENT

Interns may be assigned to any RC2 circuit, office, division, or administrative unit based upon agency need, available supervision, the student's qualifications, and the educational value of the proposed assignment.

Potential assignments may include criminal, dependency, appellate, administrative, legislative, research, investigative, or other agency functions.

RC2 is not required to offer internships in every office, division, or practice area each semester.

The number of interns accepted during any semester will be determined by RC2 based upon operational needs and the ability of staff to provide appropriate supervision.

VII. INTERN DUTIES

Depending upon education, experience, placement, and applicable legal restrictions, interns may assist with activities including:

- Legal research;
- Drafting memoranda, motions, correspondence, or other documents;
- Reviewing discovery and case materials;
- Summarizing depositions, records, transcripts, or evidence;
- Observing hearings, depositions, trials, and client meetings;
- Assisting attorneys with trial or hearing preparation;
- Researching statutory, procedural, legislative, or policy issues;
- Assisting with appropriate administrative projects;
- Observing the operation of the criminal and dependency court systems; and
- Other assignments approved by the supervising attorney or RC2 management.

Interns who are not Certified Legal Interns may not engage in the unauthorized practice of law, provide legal advice, independently represent clients, or perform any activity requiring admission to The Florida Bar or certification under applicable Florida Supreme Court rules.

VIII. WORK SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

Before the internship begins, the intern and supervisor will establish a regular work schedule appropriate for the semester and assignment.

Interns are expected to:

- Maintain consistent attendance;
- Arrive and report as scheduled;
- Notify the supervisor promptly of anticipated absences or schedule changes;

- Complete assignments within established deadlines; and
- Meet any minimum hour requirements established by RC2 or the student's educational institution.

Internships are educational commitments. Repeated absences, failure to maintain an agreed schedule, failure to complete assigned work, or other performance concerns may result in termination of the internship.

IX. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

RC2 internships under this program are **unpaid**.

Interns are not employees of RC2 by virtue of participation in the internship program and are not eligible for salary, state employee benefits, leave, retirement benefits, or other employee compensation.

Participation in the program does not create a promise or expectation of future employment with RC2.

Any stipend, scholarship, grant, work-study payment, or other financial support provided independently by a school or third-party educational program must be disclosed to RC2 when required.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY

Interns may have access to confidential, privileged, exempt, or otherwise protected information.

All interns must maintain strict confidentiality regarding agency matters, including information concerning:

- Clients;
- Pending or closed cases;
- Discovery;
- Attorney-client communications;
- Attorney work product;
- Medical, psychological, educational, or other confidential records;
- Juvenile and dependency matters;
- Personnel matters; and
- Other information protected by law, court rule, court order, or agency policy.

Confidentiality obligations continue after the internship ends.

Interns may be required to sign confidentiality or acknowledgment forms before beginning work.

XI. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Interns are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner consistent with the responsibilities of a Florida governmental law office.

Interns must follow:

- RC2 policies and procedures;

- Instructions from supervising attorneys and staff;
- Applicable court rules and professional standards;
- Workplace conduct requirements;
- Information-security requirements; and
- Rules governing confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

Interns must exercise appropriate judgment in all communications involving clients, attorneys, judges, court personnel, opposing counsel, witnesses, experts, vendors, and members of the public.

XII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Before beginning an internship, applicants must disclose any employment, internship, volunteer activity, legal practice, family relationship, or other circumstance that could create an actual or potential conflict of interest.

Interns must immediately report any conflict or potential conflict identified during the internship.

RC2 may decline, modify, or terminate an internship when necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, appearance of impropriety, confidentiality concern, or interference with the representation of an RC2 client.

XIII. INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND CASE ACCESS

Access to RC2 computers, case-management systems, email, files, databases, and other agency resources is limited to legitimate internship assignments.

Interns may access only those cases, records, or systems necessary to complete an assigned task.

Agency information may not be copied, transmitted, photographed, downloaded, posted, retained, or removed from RC2 systems or facilities except as specifically authorized.

All RC2 records, research, drafts, work product, and other materials created or obtained during the internship remain the property of RC2.

XIV. SUPERVISION

Each intern will be assigned an attorney, administrator, or other appropriate employee responsible for supervising the internship.

Supervisors are responsible for providing reasonable direction, assignments, feedback, and oversight consistent with the intern's education and experience.

Interns may not independently undertake work or communicate on behalf of RC2 outside the scope of their assigned responsibilities.

XV. EVALUATIONS AND SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

When reasonable and approved in advance, RC2 may cooperate with an educational institution by completing internship evaluations, verifying hours, or providing other routine documentation.

The intern is responsible for providing school requirements and deadlines to the supervisor sufficiently in advance.

RC2 is not required to modify its operations or internship responsibilities to satisfy requirements imposed by an educational institution.

XVI. TERMINATION OF INTERNSHIP

An internship may be ended at any time by either RC2 or the intern.

RC2 may terminate an internship immediately when warranted by circumstances including:

- Breach of confidentiality;
- Conflict of interest;
- Inappropriate access to agency information;
- Misconduct;
- Unprofessional behavior;
- Excessive absenteeism;
- Failure to complete assigned responsibilities;
- Violation of RC2 policy;
- Operational necessity; or
- Any circumstance in which continued participation is not in the best interest of RC2 or its clients.

XVII. NO GUARANTEE OF EMPLOYMENT

Participation in the RC2 Internship Program does not create an employment relationship or guarantee consideration or preference for a future position with RC2.

Interns interested in employment with RC2 must apply through the applicable recruitment and hiring process.

Successful completion of an internship may be considered as relevant experience if the former intern later applies for employment with RC2.

XVIII. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Administrative Director, Regional Counsel, or designee will oversee the RC2 Internship Program.

Internship placements are subject to approval by RC2 Administration and may be limited or suspended based upon staffing, workload, office space, supervisory capacity, budget considerations, or other operational needs.