

INTERN SUCCESS STORY



KARI HONEA

The Comptroller's office provided me the building blocks I needed to grow professionally.

I began my career with the Comptroller's office as a summer legal intern, fresh out of law school with a license to practice law. I had no idea that I would ultimately find myself immersed in state and local tax law and loving it. Over a decade later, I have held several positions within the agency. The experience gained from each new position has built on my prior experiences, allowing me to grow professionally and personally, and preparing me to mentor my own summer legal interns now.

Finding my place.

During my summer internship, I worked on actual research projects for the agency, including updating the employee handbook for our out-of-state offices that are subject to other states' laws. I will never forget my surprise at being included in meetings and having coworkers truly listen and appreciate my findings and input. I knew, then, that the Comptroller's office was where I wanted to be.

At the end of my summer internship, I joined the Administrative Hearings Section, where I represented the agency in administrative hearings dealing with disputed tax assessments and refund denials. After working in the Administrative Hearings Section for a few years, I transferred to Tax Policy, where I was able to apply my experience in hearings to provide litigation and hearing support; work on drafting rules and private letter rulings; and answer auditor questions, among other things. My experience in Tax Policy allowed me to further develop my substantive tax knowledge and understanding.

After a few years in Tax Policy, I joined the Office of Special Counsel for Tax Hearings, where I currently support the Deputy Comptroller in her role as final

decision-maker in the administrative hearing process. In my current position, I have been able to expand my administrative law knowledge, along with my substantive tax knowledge, as I assist in preparing final decisions and orders for administrative hearings.



Kari Honea

Paying it forward: from intern to mentoring interns.

In 2018, I hired my first summer legal intern, who now also works full time for the Comptroller's office. I still have many years ahead of me in my career, but it is satisfying to feel like I have come full circle and can now mentor young attorneys and law students who are just starting out in their careers. Not surprisingly, I fully support the agency's internship program. It allows the agency an opportunity to recruit skilled employees and, I can say from first-hand experience, it also provides the interns valuable, real-world experience and a meaningful step up into the working world.

I would not be where I am today without the summer internship that opened the door to this agency and the many talented and supportive supervisors and coworkers who took time to share their experiences and knowledge with me along the way. I love working for the Comptroller's office because the people are wonderful and there are always opportunities to learn new things and grow professionally. You may not find those in other workplaces, but you will find it here. I feel lucky that, every day I come to work, I am surrounded by hard-working, knowledgeable people who support each other and want to do their best to serve the people of Texas.