

Prairie State Legal Services
Job Opportunity Announcement
Staff Attorney - Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program
Multiple Locations

Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. is launching a new, innovative program to address inequities in targeted low income neighborhoods through community lawyering, hiring community residents to work as advocates beside our staff, and providing legal information programming to help low income residents to understand their legal rights and responsibilities.

Under the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program, Staff Attorneys will address a range of legal issues including issues related to racial inequality, issues that present barriers to residents' efforts to be self-sufficient, and threats to adequate housing.

While traditional Staff Attorney positions at PSLS are based in our offices and are responding to requests for legal help that are first reviewed by our telephone counseling service, this program aims to embed our attorneys in trusted community-based locations within primarily disenfranchised communities. While our traditional Staff Attorney positions are responding to specific priority issues identified by Prairie State, the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorneys will be listening to residents and community partners and identifying legal issues disproportionately impacting the residents of such communities.

In addition to the Program Staff Attorneys, PSLS will also hire residents from the targeted communities to work as Community Advocates. These Community Advocates will assist with outreach, collaborate with the Program Staff Attorneys, and be responsible for providing training and education to other community residents.

We have full-time Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorney positions available in our offices in:

- Joliet
- Kankakee
- Rock Island

Responsibilities

Among other duties as assigned, the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Staff Attorneys in this program will:

- Provide a full range of legal services, including legal research and factual investigation, counsel and advice, brief services and document preparation, dispute resolution, and representation of clients in administrative and judicial proceedings;
- Interview and provide services to applicants on-site at community-based locations;
- Develop and maintain networking relationships with community agencies that serve the client population in targeted communities and with other local stakeholders;
- Participate in community meetings to better understand the needs of local residents;
- Conduct legal education and training for community residents;
- Provide accurate and complete information for grant reporting to funders including documenting services in client case records;
- Provide guidance and direction to the local PSLS Community Advocate and coordinate efforts with the Advocate;
- Exhibit a high level of personal energy, organization, and commitment to the position and the PSLS mission.

Salary and Benefits

The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorney positions are full-time positions at 37.5 hours per week. PSLS offers a salary competitive with similar organizations. Our Staff Attorney salary scale starts at \$50,000 per year for newly licensed attorneys and increases with each year of relevant experience. PSLS is committed to providing an excellent, comprehensive benefits package to its full-time employees that includes:

- Health insurance, including the opportunity to qualify for a wellness credit
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- 403b Retirement Plan
- Extensive training and education program
- Flex scheduling and partial remote work
- PTO that starts at 3 weeks/year and increases with additional years worked
- Paid sick leave
- 6 weeks of paid parental leave after one year of employment
- 12 paid holidays per year

Qualifications

- Currently admitted to the practice of law in the State of Illinois, or admitted in another state and eligible for reciprocity in Illinois. Consideration will be given to applicants who will be sitting for the July 2021 bar exam.
- Experience with trial advocacy and negotiation strongly preferred
- Commitment and passion for fighting inequity
- Strong understanding of challenges faced within low income communities of color preferred
- Experience working with the community at large and specifically working with diverse populations preferred
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Excellent oral/written communication, research skills, and computer competency
- Organizational and case management skills
- Ability to work effectively as a team member
- Moderate travel is necessary; valid driver's license and/or reliable transportation is required

Application Details

Please indicate "Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorney" in the subject line and email a letter identifying your office preference and explaining your interest and experience, resume, three references, and a short writing sample (no more than 10 pages) to careers@pslegal.org

Resumes accepted until positions are filled.

Prairie State Legal Services is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We recruit, employ, pay, and promote qualified applicants and employees without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity, expression, or presentation, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other legally protected status.

The Organization

Prairie State Legal Services is a not for profit civil legal aid organization that has served northern and central Illinois for more than 40 years. We have a staff of over 175 persons including training and litigation staff with extensive experience. The Justice, Equity and Opportunity Program staff will be part of their local offices and will benefit from the expertise and community connections of the local staff along with program-wide resources. PSLS encourages its staff to use their creativity in developing strategies for reaching our client population and in working with other community agencies. We strive to provide an array of services responsive to the needs of our clients. More information is available on our website at www.pslegal.org.