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Executive Director

Northwest Justice Project

Job Announcement
Managing Attorney – Eviction Prevention Unit
Central Washington

Northwest Justice Project (NJP) offers a unique leadership opportunity in a mission-driven organization serving the legal aid needs of low-income people and communities in the Central Washington region. NJP is a not-for-profit law firm that provides free civil legal services to address barriers and promote justice for low-income persons throughout the state. NJP pursues its mission of **Combatting Injustice • Strengthening Communities • Protecting Human Dignity through** legal advice and representation, community partnerships, and education to empower clients and combat injustice in all its forms.

NJP is seeking qualified Managing Attorney candidates for its Eviction Prevention Unit Central Washington region. This position primarily serves Central Washington and the service areas covered by the local offices in Wenatchee, Yakima, and Kennewick, and is part of the statewide Eviction Prevention Unit. This position can be based out of NJP's Kennewick, Wenatchee, or Yakima office.

Northwest Justice Project's Managing Attorneys play a critical role in the statewide delivery of civil legal assistance to low-income communities across Washington State. They are responsible for the overall management of regional offices and specialized units comprising Northwest Justice Project's (NJP) statewide law firm and supports carrying out the program's vision, mission, Strategic Plan and other initiatives and goals.

The Eviction Prevention Unit (EPU) was created in response to the historic Right to Appointed Counsel program authorized by the Washington State Legislature in 2021. EPU attorneys represent indigent tenants during unlawful detainer proceedings throughout the state. The Central Region Managing Attorney will oversee the law practice of the EPU's Central Region team, as well as support the statewide Eviction Prevention unit as one of the four regional Managing Attorneys. This role offers significant opportunity for professional growth and development within a larger statewide legal aid program.

The EPU Central Region Managing Attorney reports to the Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel. The Central Region Managing Attorney provides direct supervision and management of regional legal and support staff. The Central Region Managing Attorney represents the region and the EPU as part of the larger NJP leadership team.

NJP requires all employees to be vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19. Providing proof of COVID-19 vaccine is a condition of employment. Exemptions based on medical and sincerely held religious beliefs may be requested per NJP's EEO employer policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managing attorneys manage the law practice of offices/units that make up NJP's comprehensive legal aid delivery system and work with the statewide team of Managing Attorneys as a critical part of the larger NJP leadership team. Specifically the Central Region Managing Attorney's responsibilities include:

- Operates and maintains an effective regional eviction defense team to protect the rights and homes of low-income persons facing eviction throughout Central Washington.
- Ensures that staff act in pursuit of NJP's mission and vision and consistent with NJP policies and procedures.
- Provides direct supervision of advocate and support staff, implementation of program policy and compliance requirements, and development and maintenance of local, client, community and public relations.
- Together with the Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel and the Statewide Advocacy Counsel for housing, acts as a liaison between the Eviction Prevention Unit and NJP field offices and other units to ensure effective coordination between NJP programs to identify systemic improvements in eviction ndefense and housing rights around the state.
- Acts as a liaison between NJP's Eviction Prevention Unit and other organizations, volunteer attorneys, and contract attorneys providing eviction defense services to low-income tenants throughout Washington.
- Forges relationships with and between courts and other community organizations that support tenants or are engaged in the eviction process to ensure justice for low-income renters facing eviction.
- Ensures that NJP provides the training and resources necessary to support the region and the EPU and its work.
- Serving as an advocate for region staff, client and community needs in the development and implementation of NJP's statewide strategic plans, goals and initiatives.

The Central Region Managing Attorney makes attorney hiring recommendations, hires non-attorney staff, and provides ongoing coaching and support to their assigned region staff; takes corrective action to address any performance issues; and, in consultation with the Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel, Human Resources Director, and Senior Management as appropriate under the circumstances, recommends and implements disciplinary decisions, including termination of employment.

The Central Region Managing Attorney is expected to provide direct client representation as appropriate within the framework of their duties, including as needed, serving as lead counsel or co-counsel on cases to train new advocates or to expand the substantive expertise of advocates and/or provide needed support on systemically important or sensitive cases.

Supervision of Advocate and Support Staff

Communicates clear performance expectations for all regional staff as well as providing necessary support to enable staff to meet expectations.

Support staff:

- Works collaboratively to provide basic tools required to perform duties, including identification and support of training needs.
- Performance management: Provides regular, ongoing supervision and informal coaching in addition to participating in NJP's defined performance appraisal process.
- Professional Development:
    - Works collaboratively with support staff to identify opportunities for skill development, leadership opportunities, staff recognition and rewarding achievement.
    - Takes appropriate steps to improve any deficiencies in performance.
    - Makes final hiring decisions.

Attorney/Advocate staff:

- Oversight of Case Management:
    - Case assignment/review;
    - Supervision of client services/quality control;
    - Compliance requirements.
- Training Needs: Engages with each advocate to identify and support training needs.
- Performance management: Provides regular, individualized, ongoing coaching and conducts NJP's defined performance appraisal process.
- Professional Development:
    - Identifies opportunities for skill and career development, leadership opportunities, staff recognition and rewarding achievement.
    - Makes promotion recommendations regarding Lead Attorneys and/or Assistant Managing Attorneys as relevant within their region.
- In consultation with the Deputy Director and/or Director of Advocacy as appropriate, serves as resource for advocates to problem solve including, but not limited to:
    - Ethical issues;
    - Regulatory compliance;
    - Quality concerns/malpractice/risk management;
    - Conflict resolution.

Development, Maintenance of Local Community, Public Relations and Community Engagement

- Develops and maintains relationships within the region's communities, key partners and stakeholders, *e.g*. regional planning, VLP's, social services, governmental and other entities.

- Identifies, promotes and provides logistical support for funding opportunities or initiatives to support unit or other advocacy needs, *e.g.* grant proposals, special project needs, fellowship opportunities, private donors, etc.

Direct Service to Clients and Engagement in Systemic Advocacy and with Client Communities

- Case/Project responsibilities:
    - Demonstrates leadership on systemic and affirmative litigation and advocacy;
    - Participates in advocacy support activities, i.e. task forces, Strategic Advocacy Focus development and work groups;
    - Handles reduced caseload commensurate with managing responsibilities;
    - Maintain reasonable advocacy project-based workload.

Case Review, Acceptance and Priority Setting

- In collaboration with the Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel manages the system for case assignment and implementation of NJP's caseload guidance to ensure high quality legal services and professional development of all staff.
- In collaboration with the Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel makes unit caseload capacity and related decision-making, including temporary intake closures, as needed to ensure competent case handling capacity within unit.

Program Policy and General Compliance

The Central Region Managing Attorney is expected to lead their region in a manner which is consistent with/in furtherance of:

- NJP Strategic Plan and other strategic goals and initiatives;
- NJP Hiring Practices;
- Program process related to performance review of office/unit staff;
- Administrative and Accounting Procedures, including Timekeeping and Grant Compliance;
- NJP's Race Equity and Justice Initiatives;
- Personnel Policies;
- Collective Bargaining Agreement;
- NJP Program Policies;
- Caseload guidelines;
- Other program policies and procedures as from time to time established and/or revised by NJP.

Leadership

- Leads their region to ensure high quality services, to create a cohesive work environment, to maintain good morale and to address support needs within the region.

- Participates in development of and implements NJP's Strategic Plan and other initiatives.
- Communicates staff concerns to Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel, Human Resources staff or other appropriate members of the Senior Management team.
- Communicates impacts of program policy to Senior Management and related staff needs, accomplishments of team efforts and other staff recognition, etc.
- Advises the Senior Management as to the EPU region's policy initiatives, advocates for the region and EPU team and for local clients and community needs, recognizes and rewards innovative solutions to client and community needs and report as appropriate.
- Participates in and contributes to meetings with Senior Managing Attorney – Right to Counsel and Senior Management team.

Equity and Inclusion

NJP has adopted the Washington Race Equity and Justice Initiative (REJI) and is organizationally committed to fight racism and to incorporate equity and inclusion in our advocacy work and our internal systems and work environment. NJP expects all staff to uphold the REJI commitments and approach their role with a desire to learn and grow in this area. The Central Region Managing Attorney plays a critical leadership role in advancing NJP's REJI commitments and our work to center race equity within their region, support staff's anti-racist growth and development, and must be committed to identify, and work to address NJP's shortcomings and challenges in advancing our REJI commitments.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Minimum five years' legal experience with strong litigation skills required.
- Experience litigating housing or unlawful detainer actions preferred.
- Prior experience successfully managing or supervising others in a professional environment preferred.
- Experience in a formal or informal leadership role helpful.
- History of successfully mentoring other attorneys and/or law students required.
- Leadership of, involvement in, or demonstrated ability to identify and successfully pursue strategic, systemic, and affirmative advocacy.
- Commitment to advancing racial equity and experience with incorporating racial equity principles into advocacy and leadership.
- Appreciation of the differing strengths, skills, and styles of those supervised.
- Good judgment, ability to handle stress, initiative, and willingness to work as a team.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated exceptional relevant work experience as well as a commitment to serving low-income persons.
- Willingness and ability to engage with the communities to be served.

- Washington State Bar Association membership in good standing or active license in another state with the ability to obtain WSBA membership by motion is required.
- Language proficiency in a language spoken by our client communities, especially Spanish, is a plus.

If unable to meet all criteria, NJP will consider the full breadth of experience in order to determine if an applicant is deemed qualified.

Compensation: Salary range is $95,000 – $145,000 based on relevant experience. We offer a comprehensive benefits package which includes 100% paid employee health premiums and significant premium shares for family health premiums, as well as generous time off.

To Apply: Submit a letter of interest, current resume and writing sample to attorneyresume@nwjustice.org. Cover letter should directly address reason for interest in the position and outline experience mentoring others.

Application deadline: Open until filled.

NJP is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and fosters an environment free of barriers and discriminatory practices. NJP actively promotes mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity. NJP is committed to maintaining an organization whose staff, Board and clients are diverse in background, experience, race, color, national origin, gender, age, religious preference, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sensory, mental or physical abilities, veteran status, and other qualities that strengthen the program while reinforcing its commitment to basic fairness. People of color, people who identify as transgender, lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and those with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Individuals needing a reasonable accommodation for the application or interview process or for more information about the project should contact Human Resources at (206) 464-1519 or email attorneyresume@nwjustice.org