



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

230 West Wells Street, Room 800, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203

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### **LIMITED TERM FULL-TIME or PART-TIME STAFF ATTORNEY REENTRY LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM**

**Available in the following Legal Action Office Locations:  
(Milwaukee, Madison or Oshkosh)**

**Remote Work - Work from Home Opportunity**

**INTERNAL/EXTERNAL JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

**July 28, 2020**

Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. has additional funds available this year for one full-time position or multiple part-time positions in our Reentry Legal Services (RLS) Program. This position would be based out of our Milwaukee, Madison, or Oshkosh offices but work would primarily be done remotely. The RLS program staff normally travel to Wisconsin prisons around the state, but in-person prison visits have been suspended due to COVID-19 and client meetings are also being conducted remotely; we anticipate this suspension of in-person prison visits continuing through the end of 2020. However, some in office work may be required, so applications should specify their office preference (Milwaukee, Madison, or Oshkosh) in their application cover letter. The Madison office attorney positions are represented for collective bargaining and new employees may voluntarily join the United Legal Workers (ULW) union, a unit of the National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW 2320. We anticipate the term of employment will end December 31, 2020; however, the position(s) may be extended based on funding circumstances.

#### **LEGAL ACTION OF WISCONSIN, INC**

With six offices and 128 staff members, LAW is the state's largest civil legal aid firm and the state's largest public interest law firm. LAW is a non-profit law firm serving low-income people in 39 counties of southern Wisconsin. Legal Action also serves farmworkers statewide. Each year, the firm provides legal aid in about 10,000 – 12,000 cases. Our primary practice areas are housing, family, consumer, barriers to employment (restoring or obtaining drivers licenses and occupational licenses and improving inaccurate or misleading criminal background, arrest, or other records), and public benefits. LAW receives funding from numerous sources and donations.

Equal justice under law can only be achieved through the collaboration of a diverse staff. When we utilize our differences, we effect positive change for the communities we serve. We are committed to equitable inclusion across gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, sex, religion, economic circumstances, ethnicity, national origin, and culture. We are striving to transcend the construct of race and be an anti-racist law firm. We encourage staff to bring their whole selves to work each day and pledge to celebrate every aspect of who they are.

**REENTRY LEGAL SERVICES (RLS) PROGRAM:** Research has shown that people releasing from prison that are able to get and keep public benefits such as Social Security are more stable, less likely to reoffend, and less likely to become homeless. Legal Action is contracted by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide lawyers to people releasing from DOC institutions with disabilities, so that they can obtain and keep Social Security, health care, and other public benefits.

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:** Legal Action's RLS Program attorneys provide quality and aggressive representation of clients releasing from state correctional facilities, and perform all duties associated with such representation and the RLS Program. This representation focuses on public benefits and Social Security law and includes but not limited to: assisting project clients in applying for benefits (Social Security and health care and other public benefits); developing medical records to support their applications for benefits; and providing advocacy when Social Security and health care and other public benefits are denied. RLS Program attorneys are expected to stay abreast with the law as it changes and develops, particularly in the areas of Social Security and health care and other public benefits. In addition to following Legal Action's policies & procedures and Supreme Court rules governing the practice of law, project attorneys must follow RLS Program operational protocol to receive client/case referrals, conduct intake, work with project clients, and other tasks. Attorneys also share responsibility for developing and maintaining productive working relationships with other Legal Action staff, Wisconsin Department of Corrections and Community Corrections staff, state and local bar associations, community and human service organizations, and others. Attorneys may also be called upon to provide training and other assistance to members of Legal Action's Volunteer Lawyer Project. Finally, each attorney attends quarterly meetings of Legal Action's Public Benefits Law Priority Committees and may be assigned to participate in other Legal Action Priority Committees, such as Housing, Employment, Consumer, or Family.

**TARGET POPULATION & WORK WITHIN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES:** The RLS Program attorneys will be working with persons who have been prosecuted for a criminal offense(s) and who are housed in one of Wisconsin's correctional facilities or are under community supervision and who are mentally and/or physically disabled. Program attorneys deliver legal services in correctional facilities and prisons on a regular basis. However, as stated above, in-person work in the prisons has currently been suspended.

**OTHER DUTIES:** Other duties may be assigned from time to time.

**TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS:** The RLS Program typically involves frequent travel for all project staff. Program attorneys, regardless of the Legal Action office where they are housed, typically travel at least two times per week to State of Wisconsin prisons and correctional facilities and offices, and other sites. While this travel is currently suspended, it may resume in the future when it becomes safe to do so.

**TRAINING:** The amount and structure of training that will be provided to the assistant director will be determined by his/her experience and level of knowledge of Social Security and health care and other public benefits' law.

**SUPERVISION:** Program attorneys must meet Legal Action's high standards of written and courtroom advocacy. The RLS Program attorneys are expected to comply with Legal Action's existing attorney performance standards, personnel policies, and project operating protocol. The Project Director and Assistant Project Directors use these standards, policies, and protocol to supervise legal work and overall job performance. RLS Program attorneys participate in regular reviews of all case work with the Project Director and/or other supervising attorneys.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Admission to the Wisconsin State Bar is required upon hire or must be eligible to be admitted to the Wisconsin Bar by virtue of reciprocity or by passing the Wisconsin bar examination at the earliest possible opportunity.

Legal Action will also consider the applicant's:

- 1) Knowledge and understanding of the civil legal problems and needs of people with disabilities, people reentering the community after incarceration, and/or low-income persons;
- 2) Commitment to providing free, high-quality, and aggressive civil legal services to such persons;
- 3) Prior legal or other work in the client community or in other firms and programs providing help to the poor;
- 4) Ability to communicate with people who speak a language other than English as their principal language (e.g., Spanish);
- 5) Cultural affinity with the client community;
- 6) Academic training;
- 7) Knowledge of and/or experience with state and federal law and procedure but particularly with Social Security and/or other public benefits law;
- 8) Ability to communicate orally and in writing in a clear and concise manner;
- 9) Ability to work harmoniously with others; and
- 10) The nature and extent of other legal experience and knowledge.

#### **SALARY, BENEFITS, AND OTHER INFORMATION**

Starting salary depends upon experience and qualifications, with a minimum starting salary of \$45,727; \$52,347 for a candidate with five years of legal experience; \$58,967 for a candidate with ten years of legal experience for a 100% full-time position. Each year, Legal Action's Board of Directors determines the amount of salary increase for non-represented attorneys. Though not guaranteed, for many years the Legal Action Board has provided an annual \$2,000 step increase.

Legal Action attorneys receive a full fringe benefit package which currently includes employer-paid health, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance; a retirement plan contribution; four weeks of vacation leave per year; four days of personal leave per year; and paid parental leave for eligible employees.

The salary and sick, annual (vacation) and personal leave benefits for a part-time employee will be pro-rated based on hours worked; salary will be based on a percentage of full-time equivalency (FTE) for a Staff Attorney based on hours worked.

### **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

The position is subject to a probationary period of up to one year.

### **GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

If the attorney works from LAW's Milwaukee or Oshkosh office, the position is governed by LAW's personnel policies. All personnel policies and salaries and benefits are subject to change by Legal Action's Board of Directors. There is no guaranteed period of employment and employment is "at will," subject to termination at any time. If the attorney works from LAW's Madison office, the position is governed by the terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement between LAW and ULW. Legal Action of Wisconsin's personnel policies will govern where no provision is covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT**

This position involves sedentary work, including sitting at a desk on a computer for an extended period. Exerting up to 10 pounds of force on a regular basis to lift, carry, push, or otherwise move objects. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to stand, sit, talk, hear and use hands and fingers to operate a computer and/or laptop keyboard and use a telephone. Specific vision abilities required for this job include close vision requirements due to computer work. Drives a motor vehicle while seated for extended periods of time occasionally. Occasional reaching, bending, kneeling and stooping involved to retrieve various items and materials. If working at a LAW office, the attorney will work in an environmentally-controlled office with moderate noise from phones, printers and light office traffic.

**We value a diverse staff and work environment. We strongly encourage applications from women, people of color, people who identify as LGBTQIA, people with disabilities, and people with life experiences or education that add to our diversity and our capacity to provide high-quality legal aid. We encourage applicants to include a statement about the ways that their unique background and personal, professional, and life experiences contribute to the diversity, cultural vitality, and perspective of our staff and our law firm's mission along with their other application materials.**

**HOW TO APPLY:** Persons interested in applying for this position should submit the following items in PDF:

- Cover letter which summarizes qualifications, skills, and experience, and indicates your preference of office location;
- Resume;
- Writing sample;
- Names and contact information for three references;
- Law school transcript (if a recent graduate); and

- Optional, but highly encouraged: A statement about the ways your unique background, and personal, professional, and life experiences contribute to the diversity, cultural vitality, and perspective of our staff and our law firm's mission and this position.

Applicants should email these items to Reentry Legal Services Program Director, Attorney Katie Alft at [RLSprogramhiring@legalaction.org](mailto:RLSprogramhiring@legalaction.org).

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:** These positions will be open until filled. We will review applicants on a rolling basis. To assure early consideration, please submit application materials by **Tuesday, August 11, 2020**.

**Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. is an  
Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.**