

**POSITION DESCRIPTION
ELDER ABUSE ATTORNEY**

**LA CROSSE OFFICE
August 8, 2019**

Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. (Legal Action) is seeking a full-time staff attorney to work in the Elder Rights Project out of our La Crosse Office. This position is funded by a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant. The attorney will provide advocacy services to elderly victims of abuse, including financial exploitation, throughout southwestern Wisconsin. The position is available immediately.

LEGAL ACTION OF WISCONSIN, INC.

Since 1968, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc., has provided civil legal aid to those who would otherwise be denied justice. Whether it's securing FoodShare for a family in need, obtaining a domestic abuse restraining order for a mother, preventing homelessness, or disputing predatory loans, Legal Action delivers high quality, personalized representation to every client, emphasizing the legal work that can create systemic change. Legal Action fights tirelessly in the southern 39 counties of Wisconsin to ensure equal access to justice regardless of income or age. In addition, Legal Action operates a statewide farmworkers project. With funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation, the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, and various other sources, this non-profit law firm represents low-income and elderly individuals at no cost to the client. Attorneys in Legal Action's six offices focus their work primarily on housing, public benefits, family law, consumer issues, and removing barriers to employment.

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.

ELDER RIGHTS PROJECT

Staff attorneys in the Elder Rights Project represent victims of abuse age sixty or older in a variety of civil legal matters. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, ERP strives to secure and stabilize the lives of vulnerable elder victims of abuse. ERP focuses on removing abusers from homes, recovering stolen assets and money, protecting elders' income and benefits, and combatting unconscionable consumer fraud and scams.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

This attorney will concentrate on issues of physical and financial abuse of seniors in multiple southwestern Wisconsin counties. He/she will be expected to become familiar with a wide range of legal issues that affect older persons and to develop expertise in the areas of domestic violence, family law, consumer fraud, Medicaid, financial exploitation, guardianship and protective placement, and other elder law issues. Staff attorneys are expected to maintain a direct service caseload on behalf of about 30 individual clients at any given time. Project staff attorneys are expected to work extensively with local domestic abuse agencies, County elder abuse investigators, and other stakeholders. Additionally, attorneys will frequently give community education presentations and provide training on elder abuse issues.

All Legal Action staff attorneys are responsible for providing quality and aggressive representation of clients in service cases and in impact work, and for performing all duties associated with such representation. Attorneys must keep up with the law as it changes and develops, particularly in their area of specialization. Attorneys are expected to share responsibility for the development and maintenance of good working relationships with community groups, as well as with state and local bar associations. Attorneys will be called upon to provide training and other assistance to members of Legal Action's Volunteer Lawyer Project. All staff attorneys will be expected to perform intake duties and, where necessary, make appropriate referrals to other community agencies. Each staff attorney is responsible for serving on at least one Priority Committee. All project attorneys will attend regular meetings of the Elder Rights Project staff.

OTHER DUTIES

Staff attorneys may train and supervise paralegal staff. Other duties may be assigned from time to time.

QUALIFICATIONS

Prior legal services or other relevant experience is preferred. Admission to the Wisconsin Bar is required, either by diploma privilege or passage of the first available bar exam. Academic training and performance, writing ability, and the nature and extent of prior legal experience in elder law, civil litigation, domestic violence, elder abuse, and legal services are important. We also consider the applicant's knowledge and understanding of legal problems and the needs of the elderly and the poor, commitment to providing legal services to the elderly and the poor, prior legal work in the client community or in other programs to aid the elderly and the poor, an ability to communicate with persons in the client community who speak a language other than English as their principal language (e.g.: Spanish), and cultural affinity with the client community.

Legal Action requires a personal commitment to legal services work and equal justice for our low-income clients, and a high commitment to providing quality and aggressive representation in service cases and in impact work. Attorneys must be knowledgeable in state and federal law and procedure. Attorneys must meet high standards of written and courtroom advocacy. Applicants must be able to communicate both orally and in writing in a clear and concise manner and work harmoniously with others.

Successful applicants may be required to undergo a criminal background check if that is required by the funding source.

Travel will be required from time to time. This will include traveling to receive training on substantive law and on elder abuse, to provide training to others who are involved in working with elder abuse victims, project-related meetings and tasks, and to provide clients with legal services. Some elderly clients may be unable to travel and the attorneys may need to travel to clients' homes in those cases.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT: This position involves sedentary work, 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 daily. Occasional reaching, bending, kneeling and stooping involved to retrieve various items and materials. This position works in an environmentally-controlled office environment with moderate noise from phones, printers and light office traffic.

SALARY

Starting salary depends upon experience and qualifications, with a minimum starting salary of \$45,727 per year for attorneys with 0 – 1 year of experience. A credit of \$1,324 is given for each 12 months of prior relevant legal work experience. For example, an attorney with 5 years (60 months) of documented, relevant work experience will be offered a starting salary of \$52,347. In addition, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, staff members may receive an annual salary increase. In 2018 and in prior years, the Board of Directors approved a \$2,000 salary increase for staff attorney positions.

FRINGE BENEFITS: Legal Action provides a generous fringe benefits package including employer-paid health and dental insurance for employees and eligible dependents. Some employees are required to contribute to the health insurance premium for their spouse, if the spouse has group health insurance provided by their employer. Legal Action also provides life and long-term disability insurance, a profit-sharing retirement plan, salary deferral options for retirement planning, low-cost employee-paid vision coverage, four weeks of vacation leave per year, four days of personal leave, a generous sick leave benefit, and four weeks of paid parental leave for eligible employees.

PERSONNEL POLICES AND “AT WILL” EMPLOYMENT

The position is subject to a probationary period of up to one year. The position is governed by the Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. Personnel Policies which are subject to unilateral change by the Legal Action Board of Directors. As with any Legal Action position, there is no guaranteed period of employment and employment is “at will”, subject to termination at any time.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should send 1/ a cover letter, 2/ resume, 3/ the names of and contact information for three references, 4/ recent writing sample(s), 5/ law school transcript and 6/ 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 to elderabuse@legalaction.org. Use PDF for all documents. Applicants, who cannot submit application materials via email, please call Nicole Zimmer, ERP project director, at 414-278-7777.

DEADLINE

This position will be open until filled but we will review applicants on a rolling basis. To assure early consideration, please submit application materials by August 23, 2019.