

Staff Attorney – Neighborhood Improvement Law Project

City of Green Bay and Door County (1 attorney)

and

City of Beloit (1 attorney)

June 24, 2019

Legal Action of Wisconsin: Since 1968, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc., has provided high-quality civil legal aid to those who otherwise would be denied justice. Whether it's securing FoodShare for a family in need, obtaining a domestic abuse restraining order for a single mother, preventing homelessness for a veteran, or disputing a predatory loan for a vulnerable elder, Legal Action delivers high-quality, personalized legal representation to every client. We emphasize the legal work that will create systemic change for all.

Legal Action fights tirelessly in the southern 39 counties of Wisconsin to ensure equal justice. With funding from the Legal Services Corporation, the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, and other sources, our non-profit law firm represents low-income and elderly individuals at no cost to clients. Attorneys in Legal Action's six offices focus their work 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 to our clients. 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.

POSITION OVERVIEW: This project is funded by a special grant from the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, made possible by a settlement to a nationwide lawsuit that challenged mortgage and foreclosure practices.

Legal Action seeks full-time staff attorneys to help stabilize neighborhoods in the City of Green Bay and in Door County (one position) and the City of Beloit (one position) communities. Working with the Green Bay and Madison office Managing Attorneys and other Legal Action staff, these staff attorneys will conduct needs assessments in Green Bay and Door County and in Beloit and will develop a service plan to address and prioritize the following issues:

- Unstable and unhealthy rental housing conditions;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Threats to homeownership because of civil legal problems such as denial of public benefits, barriers to getting and keeping a job such as past criminal background records and lack of drivers' licenses, and consumer law problems;
- Lack of counsel for low-income neighborhood residents (homeowners and tenants) to represent their needs and interests during revitalization and redevelopment efforts and to ensure their neighborhoods and communities are revitalized and redeveloped;
- Foreclosures; and
- Evictions.

The service delivery plan may include:

- Advising and educating community-based organizations (CBOs) on business and housing development opportunities and provide legal representation for transactional work (e.g. land acquisition, real estate closings, zoning, drafting and reviewing contracts, zoning compliance) when they undertake these opportunities.
- Providing legal representation for CBOs in seeking injunctive relief and litigating other claims to force repairs of properties blighting the neighborhood and to challenge destructive behaviors by non-resident property owners.
- In conjunction with municipal government enforcement strategies, providing civil litigation on behalf of CBOs and tenants by bad actor landlords.
- Identifying current and potential federal, state, and local laws, policies, and practices that affect neighborhood and community stabilization; informing and advising community members and community groups about their effects and potential remedies; developing plans to address them; and assisting those community members and CBOs in implementing that plan.
- Providing representation to CBOs, associations, neighbors, property owners, etc. to assist with legal incorporation (IRS and the State).
- Advising, educating, and providing representation to community groups to increase desirable development and to protect against unwanted development (e.g. companies or industry that harms the environment or worsens neighborhood isolation) and illegal activities (e.g. drug houses and drug dealing, human trafficking).
- Providing transactional and litigation representation to resident homeowners, family members, and older homeowners who have title issues and other problems in transferring their homes.
- Defending against evictions when they are filed and prevent evictions if they are forthcoming.
- Providing advice, brief legal services, extended representation, and litigation for foreclosure defense and prevention in both mortgage and tax foreclosures.

- Providing representation, in administrative hearings and court, to resident homeowners, family members, and older homeowners who are denied public services and benefits that would stabilize communities and neighborhoods.
- In courts and administrative law proceedings, solving the range of other civil legal problems that individual clients (both tenants and homeowners) face, and that lead to economic, housing, and neighborhood instability and that prevent them from being long-term community residents. Those collateral but destabilizing civil legal problems may include: eviction court records appearing on CCAP; wrongful termination or eviction from subsidized or public housing, or wrongful denials of housing benefits in the first place; inability to get or keep a family-supporting job because of civil legal problems such as a driver's license suspension; difficulty in obtaining public benefits that help support individuals and families; and exorbitant civil forfeiture orders and other court debt.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Enthusiasm for civil legal aid and equal justice for and service to our clients.
- At least three years of experience practicing law is desired, though not required.
- Admission to the Wisconsin Bar, by diploma privilege or by passage of the first available bar exam.
- Prior legal aid or other relevant supervision experience is desired, though not required.
- Familiarity with courtroom procedure, both federal and state.
- Superior skills in case analysis, research, and writing.
- Demonstrated ability to speak and write clearly and persuasively.
- Enthusiasm for arguing motions and representing at trial.
- Self-motivated, diligent, and able to meet strict deadlines while under pressure.
- A valid driver's license and maintain it throughout employment.
- Respect for differences in race, ethnicity, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and socio-economic circumstances.
- Ability to work harmoniously with others.
- Fluency in a language other than English and cultural affinity for the client community that speaks that language is highly desired, though not required.

Legal Action will provide training and support, as needed.

TRAVEL: Daily travel within Beloit will be required for the Beloit position. Regular travel (once every two weeks, at a minimum) to Legal Action's Madison office to meet with Madison office staff and supervisor (Madison Managing Attorney) will be required. Occasional out-of-state, overnight travel (approximately 2 times/year) may also be required. All work-related travel is reimbursed per Legal Action's travel policies.

TRAVEL: Daily travel within Green Bay and Door County will be required for the Green Bay/Door County position. Occasional other in-state (approximately once every two months) and out-of-state, overnight travel (approximately 2 times/year) will also be required. All work-related travel is reimbursed per Legal Action's travel policies.

OFFICE LOCATION: One attorney position (City of Green Bay and Door County) will be based in Legal Action's Green Bay office. Legal Action will not compensate for commuting expenses to and from Green Bay if the attorney does not live there or within Green Bay if the attorney lives there. Travel expenses to/from Legal Action's Green Bay office and Door County and within the City of Green Bay will be eligible for reimbursement under Legal Action's travel policies. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period and performance reviews, a telecommuting arrangement may be considered under Legal Action's personnel policies.

OFFICE LOCATION: One attorney position (City of Beloit) will have a private office within a community partner organization in Beloit. The attorney will be a member of our Madison office staff. Beloit is the placement of this staff attorney, therefore, Legal Action will not compensate for commuting expenses to and from Beloit if the attorney does not live there, or within Beloit if the attorney lives there. Travel expenses to/from Legal Action's Madison office (to attend Madison office staff meetings, meet with supervisor, and meet with other relevant Legal Action staff) will be eligible for reimbursement under Legal Action's travel policies. After satisfactory completion of the probationary period and performance reviews, a telecommuting arrangement may be considered under Legal Action's personnel policies.

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 occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently 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. 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 for this position depends upon experience and qualifications but will have a minimum annual starting salary of \$45,727 for an attorney with 0 – 1 year of experience. A credit of \$1,324 will be 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 benefit package including employer-paid health and dental insurance for employees, spouses and life partners, and children. (Some employees are required to contribute to the health insurance premium for their spouse if the spouse has other insurance available.) Legal Action also provides life and long-term disability insurance, a contribution by Legal Action to a retirement plan, four weeks of vacation leave per year, 4 days of personal leave per year, and generous sick leave.

UNION: The City of Beloit attorney position (in Legal Action's Madison Office) is represented for collective bargaining by the United Legal Workers (ULW) union. The incumbent may voluntarily join the

ULW. The City of Green Bay/Door County attorney position (in Legal Action's Green Bay office) is not represented by a union.

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

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND "AT WILL" EMPLOYMENT: 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 the following documents in PDF format to neighborhoodlaw@legalaction.org

1. Cover letter, summarizing interest in the position and qualifications. Include your position preference: City of Beloit (1 attorney position) or city of Green Bay and Door County (1 attorney position).
2. Resume
3. Names of and contact information for three references. (References will not be contacted without first notifying the applicant.)
4. Recent writing sample(s)
5. Copy of law school transcript
6. Optional, but encouraged: 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.

DEADLINE: The position will be open until filled, but we will review applications on a rolling basis beginning on 7/5/2019