

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

STAFF ATTORNEY MILWAUKEE OR OSHKOSH OFFICE SOCIAL SECURITY & PUBLIC BENEFITS SPECIALIST FOR THE DISABLED OFFENDERS ECONOMIC SECURITY (DOES) PROJECT

January 6, 2020

Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. has an immediate opening for a full-time staff attorney who will specialize in obtaining Social Security and other public and health care benefits for people with mental and physical disabilities who are releasing from Wisconsin's state prison system. The attorney may be housed in Legal Action's Milwaukee or Oshkosh Office. Applicants should specify their office preference (Milwaukee or Oshkosh) in their application cover letter.

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.

DISABLED OFFENDERS ECONOMIC SECURITY (DOES) PROJECT: Research has shown that people releasing from prison who 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 funded by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide lawyers to people with disabilities who are releasing from DOC institutions, so that they can obtain and keep Social Security, health care, and other public benefits.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES: Legal Action's DOES Project attorneys provide quality and aggressive representation to clients releasing from state correctional facilities. This representation focuses on public benefits and Social Security law and includes but is 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. DOES project 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 DOES project operational protocol to receive client/case referrals, conduct intake, work with project clients, and other tasks.

Project 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 Law.

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

TARGET POPULATION & WORK WITHIN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES: The DOES Project attorney will be working with persons with mental and/or physical disabilities who have been convicted of a criminal offense(s) and who are housed in one of Wisconsin's correctional facilities or are under community supervision. Project attorneys deliver legal services in correctional facilities and prisons on a regular basis.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS: The DOES project involves frequent travel. Project attorneys, regardless of the Legal Action office where they are housed, typically travel at least two times per week to State of Wisconsin prisons, correctional facilities and offices, and other sites.

TRAINING: The amount and structure of training provided to the DOES Project attorney will be determined by his/her experience and level of knowledge of Social Security, health care, and other public benefit laws.

SUPERVISION: The Project attorney must meet Legal Action's high standards of written and courtroom advocacy. The Project attorney is 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. The Project attorney will participate in regular reviews of all case work with the Project Director and/or other supervising attorneys.

LEGAL ACTION PERSONNEL POLICIES: This 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. DOES project attorneys are subject to a probationary period of up to one year. In addition, as with any Legal Action position, there is no guaranteed period of employment and employment is "at will," subject to termination at any time.

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:

- 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;
- Commitment to providing free, high-quality, and aggressive civil legal services to such persons;
- Prior legal or other work in the client community or in other firms and programs providing help to the poor;

- Ability to communicate with people who speak a language other than English as their principal language (e.g., Spanish);
- Cultural affinity with the client community;
- Academic training;
- Knowledge of and/or experience with state and federal law and procedure but particularly with Social Security and/or other public benefits law;
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing in a clear and concise manner;
- Ability to work harmoniously with others; and
- Nature and extent of other legal experience and knowledge.

SALARY & BENEFITS: Starting salary depends upon experience and qualifications, with a minimum starting salary of \$45,727. This position includes a full fringe benefit package with health, dental, life and long-term disability insurance, a retirement plan, plus four weeks of vacation leave per year.

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 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 in the LAW office and during on-site prison appointments.

HOW TO APPLY: Persons interested in applying for this position should submit the following items in PDF to Attorney Katie Alft at doesprojecthiring@LegalAction.org:

- 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: 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.

DEADLINE TO APPLY: January 24, 2020 at 5 p.m.

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