Housing Staff Attorney

Deadline for Submission: Application materials will be reviewed and interviews will be scheduled on a rolling basis; interested and qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to submit their application materials as soon as possible.

The Position: MLRI seeks an experienced, strategic and dynamic attorney with a background in housing law and policy to join its Housing Practice Group and advocate on behalf of low-income and marginalized tenants and homeowners statewide.

About MLRI: Founded in 1968, MLRI is a nationally-recognized nonprofit poverty law and policy center that provides statewide advocacy and leadership in advancing laws, policies, and practices that secure economic, racial, and social justice for low-income people and communities. We pursue systems change through impact litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, coalition building, community lawyering, and other strategies that address systemic harm to low-income people. MLRI’s approach is based on a racial justice and anti-racist framework and uses community-driven and collective impact strategies to advance high impact change. MLRI also serves as the statewide multi-issue poverty law support center for the Massachusetts civil legal aid delivery system; our advocates provide substantive expertise and technical assistance to frontline legal aid field program advocates and to many other advocates and providers who serve low-income people and communities in Massachusetts.

MLRI’s housing advocates have played a significant role in advancing systemic solutions and policy reforms that have impacted thousands of low income tenants and homeowners. A few recent examples include: leading the effort to pass legislation expanding Housing Court jurisdiction statewide; working with community organizations to pass the strongest statewide COVID-related eviction moratorium in the country; and steering a broad coalition to successfully advocate for the creation of the $18 million COVID Eviction Legal Help Project that provided legal advocacy for low income tenants and owner occupants during the pandemic. In addition, our housing advocates provide legal and legislative counsel, technical assistance and support to empower community-based organizations, tenant groups, and others advancing housing justice in communities across Massachusetts.

Job Responsibilities:
- Advocate for housing rights through litigation, legislative and administrative policy advocacy, community partnerships, and educational materials for the public and policymakers.
- Together with the MLRI Housing Practice Group members, provide advocacy leadership and support to the Massachusetts legal services community and advocates statewide in areas including public and subsidized housing; tenants' rights in evictions; fair housing; addressing issues of housing preservation, gentrification and displacement; and working closely with community partners committed to housing equity and opportunity.
- Lead and coordinate coalitions and advisory groups on statewide legislative campaigns and, in collaboration with advocacy partners, develop and implement legislative campaign strategies.
• Offer technical assistance and trainings to legal aid advocates, clients groups (e.g., public housing tenants), community-based organizations and housing advocacy groups.
• Work creatively and effectively to support residents, supporters and other advocates fighting to preserve long-term affordability of multi-family developments.
• Work with the Housing Practice Group members to lead regular meetings of the statewide Housing Coalition of advocates.
• Lead teams on specific advocacy projects, and produce community legal education materials on housing law.

Desired Experience & Qualifications:
• J.D. and licensed (or eligible to become licensed) to practice law in Massachusetts.
• Minimum 5 years legal experience.
• Experience or background in housing law and policy including public and subsidized housing, landlord-tenant issues, eviction defense, housing preservation, foreclosures, gentrification, fair housing and race equity, and other housing opportunity issues.
• Demonstrated litigation and/or policy advocacy experience.
• Project management experience highly desirable.
• Demonstrated ability to work with clients groups, community-based groups and coalitions.
• Excellent research and writing skills.
• Ability to work independently and collaboratively.
• Excellent oral communication and interpersonal skills.
• Strong organizational skills, strategic thinker, and creative.
• Commitment to MLRI’s mission to serve low-income and vulnerable populations and to advance an anti-racist, community-driven advocacy agenda.

Salary and Benefits:
MLRI offers competitive salary and benefits relative to other legal aid programs in Greater Boston. Staff Attorney salary scale is based on years of relevant post-J.D. attorney experience. For example, the current annual salary at 5 years of experience is $70,000; 10 years is $77,750; 15 years is $84,500. (Note: MLRI salary scales will be updated in 2023.) MLRI provides a very generous benefits package, including health, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, 403(b) plan with a 2% employer contribution, as well as vacation, holiday, and family leave.

How to Apply:
Please email a cover letter outlining experience and qualifications, a resume, and two writing samples to humanresources@mlri.org. No phone calls please.

MLRI’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
MLRI is an equal opportunity employer. We value a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture. We believe that having a staff, board, and volunteers with diverse personal and professional backgrounds and lived experience enhances our ability to meet our mission and creates an environment where all members of our community can thrive. We strongly encourage applications from people of color, immigrants, women, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, people with lived experience of poverty and/or racism, and people from underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

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