



**Job Opportunity Announcement**  
**Staff Attorney -Justice, Equity and Opportunity Program**  
**Rockford, IL**

Every day, people across Illinois are denied the basic rights to which they are entitled under the law simply because they can't afford a lawyer. It's our mission to change that.

Prairie State Legal Services, Inc. is launching a new, innovative program to address inequities in targeted low income neighborhoods through community lawyering, hiring community residents to work as advocates beside our staff, and providing legal information programming to help low income residents to understand their legal rights and responsibilities.

Under the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program, Staff Attorneys will address a range of legal issues including issues related to racial inequality, issues that present barriers to residents' efforts to be self-sufficient, and threats to adequate housing. In addition to the Program Staff Attorneys, PSLS will also hire residents from the targeted communities to work as Community Advocates. These Community Advocates will assist with outreach, collaborate with the Program Staff Attorneys, and be responsible for providing training and education to other community residents.

While traditional Staff Attorney positions at PSLS are responding to requests for legal help that are first reviewed by our telephone counseling service, this program aims to embed our attorneys in trusted community-based locations within primarily disenfranchised communities. The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorneys will be listening to residents and community partners and identifying the legal issues disproportionately impacting the residents of such communities.

**Responsibilities**

Among other duties as assigned, the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Staff Attorneys in this program will:

- Provide a full range of legal services, including legal research and factual investigation, counsel and advice, brief services and document preparation, dispute resolution, and representation of clients in administrative and judicial proceedings
- Interview and provide services to applicants on-site at community-based locations
- Develop and maintain networking relationships with community agencies that serve the client population in targeted communities and with other local stakeholders
- Participate in community meetings to better understand the needs of local residents
- Conduct legal education and training for community residents
- Provide accurate and complete information for grant reporting to funders including documenting services in client case records
- Provide guidance and direction to the local PSLS Community Advocate and coordinate efforts with the Advocate
- Exhibit a high level of personal energy, organization, and commitment to the position and the PSLS mission

**Qualifications**

- Candidates currently admitted to the practice of law in the State of Illinois, or admitted in another state

and eligible for reciprocity in Illinois are preferred. Consideration will be given to law graduates that will be sitting for the next bar exam

- Experience with trial advocacy and negotiation strongly preferred
- Commitment and passion for fighting inequity
- Strong understanding of challenges faced within low income communities of color preferred
- Experience working with the community at large and specifically working with diverse populations preferred
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Excellent oral/written communication, research skills, and computer competency
- Organizational and case management skills
- Ability to work effectively as a team member
- Moderate travel is necessary; valid driver's license and/or reliable transportation is required

### **Salary and Benefits**

The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorney position is a full-time position at 37.5 hours per week. PSLS offers a salary competitive with similar organizations. Our Staff Attorney salary scale starts at \$60,577 per year for newly licensed attorneys and increases with relevant experience. PSLS is committed to providing an excellent, comprehensive benefits package to its full-time employees that includes:

- Health insurance, including the opportunity to qualify for a wellness credit
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- 403b Retirement Plan
- Extensive training and education program
- Flex scheduling and partial remote work
- PTO that starts at 3 weeks/year and increases with additional years worked
- Paid sick leave
- 6 weeks of paid parental leave after one year of employment
- 12 paid holidays per year

### **Application Details**

Please indicate "Rockford - Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Program Staff Attorney" in the subject line and email a letter explaining your interest and experience, resume, three references, and a short writing sample (no more than 10 pages) to [careers@pslegal.org](mailto:careers@pslegal.org)

### **Resumes accepted until positions are filled**

Prairie State Legal Services is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We recruit, employ, pay, and promote qualified applicants and employees without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity, expression, or presentation, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other legally protected status.

### **The Organization**

PSLS is a not for profit civil legal aid organization that has served northern and central Illinois for 45 years, maintains 11 office locations, and has a staff of nearly 200 employees, including training and litigation staff with extensive experience. Our 36 county service area includes rural communities, suburban areas, and mid-size urban cities, which necessitates the development of diverse strategies, and we encourage our staff to cultivate and utilize creative approaches to reach and serve our client population. Employees of PSLS benefit from the expertise and community connections of their local office staff, along with robust program-wide resources. We strive to provide an array of services responsive to the needs of our clients. PSLS has excellent fiscal controls and upholds the highest rating from Charity Navigator and Guidestar. For more information regarding PSLS services and operations, please visit our website at [www.pslegal.org](http://www.pslegal.org).