

Legal Director of Youth Justice Program Any LAJC Office (Charlottesville, Falls Church, or Richmond)

About LAJC

The Legal Aid Justice Center is a nationally recognized, non-profit organization that partners with communities and clients to fight for racial, social, and economic justice. We understand that the harms our clients endure are inextricably linked to overarching systems of injustice. Together we are dismantling those systems through a combination of community organizing, litigation, policy advocacy, public relations, and individual legal services.

Very recently, we helped lead the fight to reform Virginia's unemployment insurance system including advocacy that resulted in the distribution of over \$1 billion in illegally withheld payments to over 160,000 Virginians. During the pandemic, we helped hundreds of families avoid eviction through a combination of legal representation and help accessing rent relief funds. Our staff are on the front lines of some of the most important anti-poverty fights happening today.

Founded in 1967, LAJC has offices in Charlottesville, Richmond, Petersburg, and Falls Church and provides services under six key program areas: Civil Rights & Racial Justice, Economic Justice, Youth Justice, Health Justice, Immigrant Justice, and Worker Justice. For more information, visit www.justice4all.org.

About the Youth Justice Program

The Legal Aid Justice Center's Youth Justice Program (YJP) advocates for all young people to have access to high-quality public education, strong community support, and a truly restorative youth justice system. We provide legal services to youth and families and advocate for changes that keep young people in school, out of the criminal legal and child welfare systems, and protected from discrimination.

YJP organizers and attorneys collaborate closely to design and implement campaigns that keep young people in school, out of the youth justice system, and living successfully in their communities. For example, over the last few years, the Youth Justice Program has successfully removed resource officers from two jurisdictions in grassroots led efforts, increased required school supports for students in the classroom, and helped a coalition of 20 organizations to win historic levels of equitable funding for Virginia public education. We also strengthen state resources for students with disabilities by helping draft and lobby successfully for legislation to better inform the public about Individual Education Plans by establishing district-level family liaisons and establishing Parent Training and Education Center.

About the Position

The Legal Aid Justice Center seeks a strategic, collaborative legal advocate to lead a creative and passionate team of attorneys and organizers as Legal Director, Youth Justice Program. Reporting to the Co-Deputy Director of Advocacy, the Legal Director provides strategic vision for and guidance over YJP's advocacy campaigns. These multi-faceted campaigns focus primarily on education and juvenile justice issues, including the following:

- Statewide education rights policy (e.g., special education, resource equity, education access, and school-to-prison pipeline)
- Statewide juvenile justice policy (e.g., decarceration, restorative/transformatiive justice, and education/mental health conditions within juvenile justice facilities)

The Youth Justice Program also serves as the convenor of the Fund Our Schools coalition and statewide Education Law Taskforce.

Job Duties

The Legal Director will have the opportunity to lead in the following areas:

- Devise strategic advocacy campaigns using the variety of tools employed by LAJC's programs, including impact litigation, individual representation, organizing, and legislative advocacy.
- Support the team in translating vision and strategy into tactical plans and decisions, including annual planning and identifying priorities for both individual representation and campaign work.
- Mentor and directly supervise staff, including attorneys, organizers, interns/fellows and volunteers.
- Engage in regular case review with attorney staff to determine appropriate case strategy and proper case file maintenance; ensure all staff record case, campaign, and outreach work in case management system.
- Build relationships with directly impacted community members, members of the bench and bar, agency heads and elected officials.
- Work in coalition and partnership with other legal, non-profit and community-based advocacy organizations.
- Serve as a member of LAJC's management team, which advises senior leadership in setting organizational priorities for all programmatic work and providing stewardship of organizational resources.
- Provide support to LAJC's fundraising team in their efforts to resource the team's work.
- Racial Equity: Promote racial equity across all dimensions, including within LAJC, by doing the following:
 - Helping to recruit, retain, and support both staff and leadership that reflect the racial composition of our community
 - Cultivating respect for the work of and expanding resources for non-attorney staff that are disproportionately people of color
 - Creating spaces for staff to discuss issues of racial, gender, and all other issues of marginalization
 - Pushing for institutional and cultural changes by management, the board, and staff to further promote racial equity.

Required Qualifications

While no one candidate will possess all the requirements listed below, the ideal candidate will have many of the following qualifications:

- Strong commitment to social, economic, and racial justice.
- Experience with education or juvenile justice law
- Minimum 5 years' membership in any state bar; if not admitted in Virginia, must be eligible to waive in or sit for the Virginia Bar. (Note: this position may be eligible for the newly enacted Virginia Supreme Court rule allowing for any attorney working exclusively for a legal aid organization to practice without examination as long as they are in good standing in another state).
- Prior management or supervisory experience (in official capacity as supervisor or substantially similar work without official title)
- Mission-aligned experience (work or lived) partnering with and advocating in low-wealth communities and communities of color
- Sincere and demonstrated commitment to racial equity, inclusion, and justice
- Familiarity with youth issues (from work or lived experience)
- Ability to work and communicate effectively across lines of identity and difference
- Ability to manage project and teams with multiple moving parts
- Ability to work effectively independently and collaboratively
- Strong oral advocacy, research and writing skills
- Willingness to work a flexible schedule that may include evening and weekend events, as well as occasional travel across the state.

Preferred Qualifications

- Policy advocacy experience at the agency and legislative level
- Experience supporting the development and execution of campaigns and/or community or movement lawyering, grassroots organizing, and coalition building
- Familiarity with working with youth with diverse backgrounds
- Experience or familiarity with supervising or working with community organizers
- Prior advocacy experience (work or lived) using an explicit race equity lens
- Flexibility and adaptive approach

A Note to Potential Candidates

Studies have shown that women, trans, non-binary folks, and BIPOC are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they meet every single one of the qualifications as described in a job description. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive organization, and strongly encourage you to apply, even if you don't believe you meet every one of the qualifications described.

Location

This role will be based in our Charlottesville, Falls Church, or Richmond office. Occasional travel between offices will be required. Although a regular presence in the office is required, LAJC offers a remote work policy to support employees in co-creating schedules and arrangements that allow us all to do our best work.

Salary

The salary scale for this position is \$103,584.90 - \$134,660.36 based on years of relevant experience and LAJC's formal salary scale, upward 12% cost-of-living adjustment (\$116,015.08 to \$150,819.61) is available for positions based in Falls Church. To allow for salary growth within the position over time, the anticipated hiring range for this position is between \$103,584.90-\$119,122.63 (\$116,015.08 -

\$150,819.61 12% adjustment for Falls Church). Placement on the range will be based on factors such as years of relevant experience, budget, and internal equity.

Application Review Date

We'll start reviewing applications after April 3, 2025. While our review process can take some time, this doesn't mean you're not being considered—please be patient as we carefully evaluate each candidate. We'll continue to accept and review applications until the position is filled.

Application Instructions

Complete the online application. This position requires a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references. Please address the cover letter to the hiring manager, Miriam Torian, **but submit all materials through the online application system.** We will not contact references without advance consent from candidates.

Benefits

Our mission is compelling, and our team members are passionate about their work, and so we recognize the need to provide generous benefits and encourage rest and a healthy work environment. For example, we provide:

- Generous paid time off every year, including 3 to 6 weeks of vacation, 12 days of health leave, 6 weeks parental leave, and 14 holidays (not including bonus holidays/rest days allocated as needed)
- 100% employer paid health, dental, and vision insurance, plus excellent family insurance with annual max of \$2,400 premium contribution to LAJC-sponsored health plan
- 403(b) retirement plan with 4% employer contribution (no required match)
- Strong commitment to professional development
- Relocation package (where applicable)

Vaccination Requirement:

The Legal Aid Justice Center requires all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have an approved medical or religious exemption as a qualification of employment. Proof of vaccination or accommodation request must be provided within one day of employment.

The Legal Aid Justice Center is an equal opportunity employer, committed to inclusive hiring and dedicated to diversity in our work and staff. We strongly encourage candidates of all identities, experiences, and communities to apply. The Legal Aid Justice Center is committed to strengthening the voices of our low-income clients, working in collaboration with community partners, and rooting out the inequities that keep people in poverty. We strive to take on the issues that have broad impact on our client communities and to be responsive to client input. Recognizing the particular impact of racism on our clients and staff, we devote special attention to dismantling racial injustice. All applicants must be dedicated to working in and sustaining an environment that enables staff and clients to feel empowered, valued, respected, and safe. In reviewing applications, we look for evidence that applicants have experience and/or thoughtfulness in working with traditionally marginalized populations.

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