

### **Job Description—Legal Advocate working with Homeless Outreach Program**

Legal Council for Health Justice (Legal Council) seeks a non-attorney Legal Advocate to work in our Homeless Outreach Program (HOP). The Legal Advocate will work under the supervision of the HOP Attorney Director to provide assistance and advocacy to clients who are living with mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders, are homeless or “at-risk” and who are seeking federal disability benefits (SSI and SSDI) or facing other legal barriers to health and wellness.

People of color, women, persons with disabilities, older persons, LGBTQ+, and Veterans are welcomed and strongly encouraged to apply.

### **About Legal Council for Health Justice:**

Founded in 1987, Legal Council is a non-profit law office that pursues legal remedies for discrimination, disadvantage, and disparities in health equity and well-being across the lifespan for Illinoisans impacted by life-changing medical conditions.

Legal Council believes that personnel diversity is an organizational strength and recognizes and values the intersectional identities that staff members bring to our organization. We are enriched by diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and ways of thinking.

### **Job Responsibilities:**

Under the supervision of the Project Attorney, the Legal Advocate will:

- Conduct weekly outreach to and represent clients utilizing a trauma-informed approach and motivational interviewing skills at sites on Chicago’s West Side.
- With prospective clients, assess likely eligibility for SSI/SSDI disability benefits and provide comprehensive assistance to clients to apply for and/or appeal the denial of benefits, complete all necessary paperwork and help the client meet program requirements.
- On an ongoing basis, investigate facts, develop evidence in support of claims, gather and summarize medical and other records (e.g. child welfare, correctional, educational) and draft written legal arguments supporting a finding of disability under federal law.
- Assist and support clients around engagement with medical and behavioral health care and other resources.
- Enter program data, monitor files and data quality, and track the number and types of linkages provided to clients.

### **Characteristics and Skills Needed for Position:**

- Must demonstrate a commitment to the mission of Legal Council.

- Must be able to manage a significant client caseload and work effectively and compassionately with persons experiencing severe mental health impairments and co-occurring substance use disorders.
- Must work well independently as well as collaboratively with Legal Council staff.
- Strong interpersonal, organizational, analytical and writing skills are a must.
- Bilingual skills (fluency in Spanish) a plus.

The ideal candidate will have the capacity for and interest in participating in administrative hearings. Candidates will be supported to pursue and maintain Non-Attorney Representative status and membership in NOSSCR (National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representative) to provide professional representation to clients in Social Security Disability cases. Current SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) advocates and practicing non-attorney disability advocates are encouraged to apply.

Candidates should discuss any experience they have in the following categories in their cover letters:

- Social Security, Medicaid, or other public benefits programs;
- General poverty law;
- Medical Legal Partnerships;
- Community Organizing;
- Outreach and engagement or behavioral health;
- Other relevant experience as described below.

**Relevant experience includes not only professional advocacy on behalf of others, but also direct and clinical services (social work, recovery support, CST and CSI), outreach and engagement, as well as personal/lived experience with poverty, chronic illness, HIV, mental illness, racism and its consequences, public housing, and the impact of substance use.**

**How to Apply:** To apply, email a resume, compelling cover letter, writing sample, and two professional references with email subject line "HOP Legal Advocate" to: [job@legalcouncil.org](mailto:job@legalcouncil.org), attn.: Ruth Edwards, Senior Director of Program Services.

**Salary:** Salary is commensurate with experience and based on agency salary scale (\$45,000 to \$50,000 depending on experience).

**Submission Deadline:** Position is open until filled.