Law Student Internship Program
Health Legal Services/Mental Health Advocacy Project

Summer 2020

About the Law Foundation

The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley advances the rights of under-represented individuals and families through legal services, strategic advocacy, and educational outreach. With over 90 employees, the Law Foundation is the largest provider of free legal services in the South Bay. Located in downtown San Jose, the Law Foundation is a dynamic and interesting place to work. We pride ourselves on fostering a work environment that is motivating, collaborative and fun, with plenty of opportunities for professional growth. We are working towards a race-conscious legal services practice.

About the Program

The Health Program of the Law Foundation empowers people identified as mentally or developmentally disabled and people living with HIV/AIDS to live more independent, secure and satisfying lives by enforcing their legal rights and advancing their social and economic well-being. Health attorneys help clients resolve problems in the areas of mental health care and treatment, financial benefits including Social Security, Medi-Cal, CalFresh, General Assistance, Medicare, CalWORKS, and In-Home Supportive Services, medical insurance coverage, estate planning, and other legal issues. Health staff regularly conduct community outreach to local homeless shelters and mental health clinics. The program is divided into two distinct but interrelated units – Patients’ Rights Unit (PRU) and the Economic Rights Unit (ERU).

The PRU provides a range of services to people receiving mental health treatment in Santa Clara County. This includes representation to person detained in locked psychiatric facilities in civil commitment hearings, investigations of denial of rights, allegations of abuse and neglect and other complaints. The unit also monitors the inpatient psychiatric hospitals in Santa Clara County and investigates complaints related to outpatient mental health services.

The ERU provides counsel, advice, and full representation to clients in matters related to their public health and income benefits, including, Social Security, Medi-Cal, CalFresh, General Assistance, Medicare, CalWORKS, and In-Home Supportive Services. ERU attorneys also provide direct legal services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic or life-threatening illnesses in a wide range of practice areas including financial benefits, medical insurance coverage, estate planning and other legal issues. Attorneys work closely with medical providers to eliminate barriers to health stability.
Job Duties

1. The law clerk will work primarily doing research and writing, including drafting letters, forms and hearing briefs.
2. Client intake interviewing including possible client representation in Administrative hearings.

Desired Qualifications

1. Strong commitment to civil rights the rights of mental health consumers, individuals living with HIV or AIDS, and other disabilities, and individuals from underserved communities
2. Ability to treat mental health consumers, individuals living with HIV or AIDS, and/or other disabilities with dignity and respect.
3. Connections to and experience working with diverse populations, including communities of color and people living with disabilities.
4. Ability to analyze, write and present ideas clearly and concisely.
5. Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
6. Passion for social justice and race equity as well as a desire to provide assistance to underserved populations.
7. Candidates of diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, persons living with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ community encouraged to apply.

LIVING ALLOWANCE
The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley provides a $7,000.00 living allowance to each summer clerk who commits to and completes a 10-week internship. We encourage candidates who will receive course credit for the work/training completed over the summer with us.

The Law Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Employer. We encourage people of color, women, people living with disabilities, older people, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people to apply. It is the policy of the Law Foundation to prohibit discrimination and harassment of any type and to afford equal employment opportunities to employees and applicants, without regard to race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, pregnancy, medical condition or genetic information, veteran status, national origin, disability, marital or other protected status. The Law Foundation will conform to the spirit, as well as the letter of all applicable laws and regulations.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until position is filled. Please submit the following via email to david.fermino@lawfoundation.org: (1) a resume and (2) a cover letter that explains why you are interested in a summer internship with us, and a paragraph that addresses the question below:

In order to best serve our clients and our community, the Law Foundation is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace in which differences are acknowledged and valued. How has your personal background or experiences, professional or otherwise, prepared you to contribute to social justice, race equity and diversity among our staff?