PROGRAM COUNSEL

Job Summary

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights seeks an attorney to serve in the role of Program Counsel. This attorney will join an integrated and collaborative advocacy team focused on three core practice areas: Education Equity, Equitable Community Development and Housing, and Voting Rights and Civic Empowerment. This Program Counsel position will focus on Education Equity and will report to the Senior Counsel in the Education Equity Team.

The Program Counsel position is an exciting opportunity for an attorney with litigation and policy advocacy experience who can bring vision, talent, and enthusiasm to the role at a time when aggressive civil rights advocacy is needed more than ever. Candidates should have experience addressing education equity issues, including a deep understanding of how civil rights laws can be used to address systemic barriers to fair and equitable educational opportunities. Candidates should also have a strong commitment to community lawyering and be able to share examples of putting community lawyering principles to work in their practice. The Program Counsel must demonstrate a passion for civil rights, racial equity, and community empowerment.

Our Organization

Founded in 1969, Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights works to secure racial equity and economic opportunity for all. We provide legal support through partnerships with the private bar and collaborate with grassroots organizations and other advocacy groups to implement community-based reforms. We have a diverse staff of 19 and a 21-member board that includes leaders from law firms, corporations, government, and philanthropy. Racial equity is central to our external advocacy, along with our internal operations. Chicago Lawyers’ Committee has achieved significant litigation and policy reform victories throughout our history with support from over 40 member law firms. Pro bono partnerships are central to our business model and delivery of legal assistance.

The Education Equity Team protects and promotes access to education by addressing the individual and systemic barriers that disproportionately impact communities of color. We work to protect individual students’ rights; we address systemic barriers by promoting school policy reform using an explicit racial justice lens; and we employ a community lawyering model to advise community groups, advocate for partnerships and conduct outreach to parents and students, including those who are affected by the school-to-prison pipeline and exclusionary discipline policies. Our systemic advocacy includes serving as the lead coordinator of an interdisciplinary statewide collaborative – the Transforming School Discipline Collaborative – that works to reduce punitive and exclusionary discipline in Illinois’ schools and promotes restorative approaches to school discipline.
Key Responsibilities

**Litigation and individual representation**
- Screen clients and legal matters for eligibility for pro bono legal services
- Provide representation or referrals to youth at risk of losing access to education due to racial discrimination, harsh discipline, re-enrollment barriers or involvement in the criminal justice system
- Support litigation challenging systemic barriers to education that disproportionately impact communities of color

**Policy**
- Serve as lead coordinator of the Transforming School Discipline Collaborative (TSDC), including helping to organize and support TSDC trainings and other projects
- Provide policy and advocacy support to coalitions and community partners seeking to address systemic barriers to fair and equitable educational opportunities
- Produce publications, including issue briefs, fact sheets, and blog posts, on an as-needed basis

**Community advocacy & outreach**
- Conduct community outreach and education events
- Attend coalition meetings, assist with ongoing advocacy efforts, and collaborate with community partners on campaigns and initiatives for structural change

**Required Skills and Abilities**
- High degree of flexibility and willingness to work on a broad range of legal issues, ability to multi-task, significant initiative, and attention to details and accuracy
- Ability to prioritize tasks and work effectively in a fast-paced environment
- Excellent people skills, especially the ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups and individuals
- Cross cultural competencies and self-awareness around issues of power, privilege, and difference
- Excellent writing and communications skills
- Spanish language proficiency is preferred but not required

**Education and Experience**
- Law degree
- 2 to 8 years of relevant experience as an attorney and/or policy advocate
- Experience working with community organizations, students, parents, organizers, teachers and school staff, and/or coalitions

**Salary and Benefits:** Salary range is $55,000 - $75,000 per year depending on experience. Generous benefits include PTO and paid leave; health, dental, and vision plans; employer-provided life and disability insurance; and a retirement savings plan.
To Apply: Please e-mail a cover letter and resume, writing sample and 3 references to: Elesha Jackson, Director of Administration, ejackson@clccrul.org. Please, no telephone inquiries.

*Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We prioritize equity and inclusion in our organizational culture and hiring, and value candidates with lived experience in the communities we serve. We welcome all applicants regardless of race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, service in the military or other identify factor.*