Senior Counsel
EQUITABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights seeks an experienced attorney to develop and lead impact litigation and systemic policy advocacy with an emphasis on fair housing and equitable community development in partnership with grassroots organizations and coalitions.

Founded in 1969, Chicago Lawyers’ Committee is Chicago’s preeminent non-profit civil rights legal organization. Our mission and strategic direction explicitly focus on racial equity and we collaborate with grassroots organizations and other advocacy groups to implement community-based solutions that advance civil rights. We provide legal representation through in-house staff and long-standing partnerships with over 40 member law firms. Located in downtown Chicago, Chicago Lawyers’ Committee has a 20-member staff and a $2.1 million annual budget with a healthy mix of funding sources.

Our work in the field of fair housing and equitable community development includes systemic litigation to combat discriminatory policies and practices that perpetuate racial and economic segregation and inequality of opportunity. We investigate complaints of discrimination and provide representation to individuals and groups to challenge discrimination based on race, national origin and other protected classes. We advocate for economic development in historically disinvested communities of color and support the stabilization and improvement of housing and fighting against displacement. Examples of our recent work include advocacy to improve a City ordinance designed to redress historic racial and economic housing segregation, systemic litigation challenging historic racial inequities in property tax assessments, and federal litigation challenging housing admissions policies with overly-broad criminal background bans.

The Senior Counsel position is an exciting leadership opportunity for an experienced attorney with substantial 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 significant experience addressing fair housing or community economic development issues, including a deep understanding of how civil rights laws can be used to address historic and entrenched systems or racial and economic segregation. Candidates should also have a strong commitment to community-based advocacy and significant experience putting community and movement lawyering principles into practice. The Senior Counsel must demonstrate a passion for civil rights, racial equity, and community empowerment, and possess the skills needed to be a successful advocate, as well as an effective manager of people and projects. The Senior Counsel will report to and work closely with the Chief Counsel.
Duties include:

- Lead the Equitable Community Development and Housing team, including managing and supervising team members; directing annual workplan development, implementation and accountability to goals; and overseeing all legal work and advocacy activities of the team.
- Develop and lead high impact litigation and policy advocacy in the fair housing and equitable community development field based on systems and structural analysis with an explicit racial equity lens.
- Build and strengthen partnerships with organizations and coalitions from communities impacted by systemic racism.
- Collaborate with colleagues to identify intersections and develop integrated advocacy approaches that advance racial equity and economic opportunity for the clients and communities we serve.
- Work with the executive director and development/communications team to raise the overall profile of Chicago Lawyers’ Committee with funders, law firms, community partners, and media.
- Build strong relationships with Chicago Lawyers’ Committee member law firms and pro bono counsel through support, training and co-counseling opportunities on housing matters.

Qualifications:

- Law degree and admission to the Illinois Bar or eligible for admission by motion.
- 8 + years of experience as a litigator and policy advocate, preferably in the field of civil rights, with knowledge of, and experience in, fair housing advocacy and equitable community development.
- Experience as a supervisor or in a senior attorney role highly preferred.
- Demonstrated commitment to addressing systemic racism.
- Experience working with community partners to further systemic advocacy.
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills.
- High degree of flexibility, ability to multi-task, significant initiative, and attention to details and accuracy.
- Excellent people skills, the ability to build a motivated and productive team, and the ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups and individuals.
- Cross cultural competencies and self-awareness around issues of power and privilege.
- Skills in Spanish, or another language other than English, valued.
Salary and Benefits: Salary range is $85,000 - $125,000 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.

Please note that we offer a flexible hybrid work arrangement, with the option to work up to 3 days remotely. Successful applicants for this position must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination upon hiring.

To Apply: Please e-mail a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and 3 references to: Elesha Jackson, Director of Administration, ejackson@clccrul.org. Please, no telephone inquiries. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To receive full and timely consideration, candidates are strongly encouraged to submit their applications by March 30, 2022.

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We prioritize equity and inclusion in our organizational culture and hiring, and we 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 identity factor.