UnCommon Law
California ChangeLawyers℠ Legal Fellow
Location: California, TBD (Oakland, Los Angeles or San Diego)
Fellowship Period: July 1, 2020- July 1, 2021
(timing may change as the COVID-19 crisis continues to evolve)
Application Deadline: April 30, 2020

We are looking for an attorney to join our growing team at UnCommon Law. UnCommon Law has developed an innovative approach to advocating for and representing people in parole consideration hearings to help them get free of their sentences of life in prison, return to the community, and live safe and productive lives. The attorney will play an integral role in a new program combining trauma-informed legal representation, counseling, and leadership development.

California ChangeLawyers℠ Fellow for UnCommon Law’s New Pilot Program

With support from California ChangeLawyers℠, we seek to hire a full-time, year-long legal Fellow to support the work of our New Pilot Program. The Fellow will be a part of a team of advocates, counselors and attorneys supporting Pilot program participants in navigating the discretionary parole process, including supporting those participants in developing new self-narratives to heal from past trauma. The Fellow will also represent program participants appearing before the parole board, and provide guidance for those with parole hearings in the future. The Fellow will be trained in UCL’s unique, trauma-informed approach to representation and have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on a harmful, ineffective system. This position will be based near the site of the Pilot prison, which will either be in Los Angeles, San Diego, or the Bay Area, to be determined in the summer of 2020. The Fellow will also be considered for a permanent position with UCL at the conclusion of the Fellowship year.

Primary Responsibilities:

Client Representation
- Manage a caseload of individual clients, including representation in current parole hearings and consultation for future hearings.
In addition to representation at hearings, client representation includes one-on-one visits with clients, correspondence and follow-up, communication with supporters and loved ones, and document review and feedback.

Pilot Program Legal Support
- Draft consultations for Pilot program participants to aid in their preparation for future parole hearings
- Participate in and facilitate inside trainings on the discretionary parole process
- Provide brief legal advice (e.g. phone or written correspondence)

Legal Research/Writing
- Draft, edit and file legal pleadings (mostly in connection with Habeas Corpus Petitions)
- Draft, edit and submit other legal advocacy documents to Board of Parole Hearings or Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation officials

UnCommon Law Organizational Support
- Attend and participate in UCL events in the community or inside prisons to educate attendees on parole hearing preparation, representation and/or on trauma experiences
- Implement a professional development plan to gain additional skills and experiences
- Maintain personal organization systems
- Utilize organizational management platforms to ensure timely and effective communication, tracking and reporting of activities.

Qualifications

Required:
- Attorney licensed in the State of California
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Compassion for incarcerated persons and their family members, and a demonstrated interest in criminal justice reform
- Creative, problem-solving mentality and approach to overcoming obstacles
- Ability to pass a background check that would permit entry into California prisons
- A willingness to approach client work with kindness, non-judgement, and confidentiality
- Ability to work independently, take initiative, and be self-motivated.

Preferred:
- Experience working with people incarcerated in jail or prison
- Experience or familiarity with California’s discretionary parole system
Timeline

Applications should be submitted as soon as possible, and not later than April 30th, 2020. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled, and applicants selected for interviews will be promptly notified.

How to apply

Please submit (1) a resume or curriculum vitae, (2) a cover letter describing your interest and relevant experience for the role, and (3) contact information for two references to our online hiring portal (https://uncommonlaw.bamboohr.com/jobs/).

UCL is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming, and culturally responsive environment for all members of our staff, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. UCL does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or prior contact with the criminal justice system. We strongly encourage applications from people impacted by incarceration as well as from traditionally underrepresented communities.

About UnCommon Law

UnCommon Law believes all people incarcerated for violent crime deserve access to healing, justice and effective legal representation.

Through our unique, trauma-informed model of advocacy, we provide the space currently missing in the system for healing, accountability, and safe pathways home from prison. In developing new self-narratives, the people we serve are able to more effectively disrupt violence inside and outside prison, and become leaders who can change negative societal narratives about those incarcerated for violent crime. Our groundbreaking approach is changing policy and outcomes, driven by the voices and experiences of system-impacted communities.

About the California ChangeLawyers℠ Legal Fellowship Program

California ChangeLawyers℠ (formerly California Bar Foundation) is a statewide foundation that empowers the next generation of lawyers, judges, and activists to create a more diverse legal profession, a fair justice system, and a better California. The foundation believes that a state as diverse as California should have a justice system led by advocates of all ethnicities and races.

ChangeLawyers℠ Fellowships support bright, diverse ChangeLawyers℠ who are committed to righting historical wrongs. Grants are awarded to legal aid organizations to cover the cost
of hiring legal fellows from diverse backgrounds. This is a double impact investment. The foundation supports organizations on the front lines of social justice while at the same time creating jobs for diverse lawyers. This creates better, more authentic outcomes for communities—communities who can see and interact with lawyers who look like them.