Civil Litigation Staff Attorney (1-2 years of experience)

PJI is a New Orleans-based nonprofit that works to create positive change for people in the Louisiana criminal system. Our work is at the intersection of direct services, impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community engagement.

We work in the incarceration capital of the world, and primarily with people living in prisons.

We believe in a world where our legal system values each person, supports rehabilitation, and approaches justice with a lens of healing and restoration for those who are harmed. This world will be safer and more secure for all people. We focus on the inhumane conditions of confinement, prosecutorial misconduct, racial bias, excessive sentences, the impacts of Jim Crow and slavery on our criminal laws, and the abolition of the death penalty.

The Staff Attorney will be a key player on our Civil Litigation Team. PJI is actively litigating the cruel and unusual punishment created by deprivation of proper medical care for all people incarcerated at Louisiana State Penitentiary (“Angola”). Angola is an 18,000-acre plantation prison larger than the island of Manhattan located on a former site of slavery and “convict leasing.” In addition to representing everyone incarcerated at Angola, we are litigating two class actions challenging Louisiana’s practice of incarcerating people beyond the lawful date those people should be released from prison. PJI’s past litigation includes a case against the extreme, inhumane heat conditions on death row at the Angola.

The Staff Attorney position will:
- Draft legal pleadings, motions, memorandums and other documents needed;
- Represent clients in court on a range of matters;
- Maintain high-standards for diligent client communication;
- Meet with clients in prisons and local jails around Louisiana;
- Contribute to all stages of civil litigation, including investigation, discovery, motions practice, trial, and monitoring
- Work in a team environment with shared goals and values;
- Communicate with partner organizations and pro bono counsel;
- Respond to requests for legal assistance;
- Other duties and responsibilities as required to meet PJI’s needs.

The Staff Attorney position will include a good deal of client interaction, and very hands-on experience (depositions, hearings, etc.) early in your tenure. The Staff Attorney will also have opportunities to work on media materials as well as to engage in policy advocacy. Where there is interest, a Staff Attorney may be able to work on some criminal cases as well.

Required Qualifications
- Law degree and admitted to the Louisiana Bar preferred, or eligibility and willingness to sit for the next Louisiana Bar
- At least one year of experience practicing civil law
- Civil litigation experience
- Demonstrated commitment to anti-racism
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong attention to detail
- Willingness to work outside of work hours when necessary
- Ability to meet the requirements set by the state for prison visitation
- Driver’s license

Preferred Qualifications
- Experience working with people impacted by the criminal court system, particularly in Louisiana or the Deep South
- Track record of strong client advocacy
- Experience working on federal civil rights cases
- Experience with class action litigation
- Experience with claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act

Salary will be commensurate with experience from $50,000-$55,000 with generous benefits including, but not limited, to full health insurance benefits at no cost, short term disability, and 401K contributions after six months.

Note: PJI has voluntarily recognized a staff union, and this position is part of the union bargaining unit.

How to Apply: Email to mbailey@defendla.org

- a cover letter
- resume
- writing sample (5-10 pages)
- three references

PJI is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity for all employees. All employment decisions at PJI are based on business needs, job requirements and individual qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion or belief, national, social or ethnic origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, physical, mental or sensory disability, HIV Status, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, past or present military service, history of incarceration, family or parental status, or any other status protected by the laws or regulations in the locations where we operate. PJI will not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on any of these characteristics. PJI encourages applicants of all ages, and does not discriminate against formerly incarcerated individuals.
Civil Litigation Staff Attorney (3-5 years of experience)

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- Respond to requests for legal assistance;
- Other duties and responsibilities as required to meet PJI’s needs.

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Required Qualifications
- Law degree and admitted to the Louisiana Bar preferred, or eligibility and willingness to sit for the next Louisiana Bar
- At least three years of experience practicing civil law
- Civil litigation experience
- Demonstrated commitment to anti-racism
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Strong attention to detail
- Experience in civil discovery
- Willingness to work outside of work hours when necessary
- Ability to meet the requirements set by the state for prison visitation
- Driver’s license

Preferred Qualifications
- Experience working with people impacted by the criminal court system, particularly in Louisiana or the Deep South
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- Experience with claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act

Salary will be commensurate with experience from $55,000 to 65,000 with generous benefits including, but not limited, to full health insurance benefits at no cost, short term disability, and 401K contributions after six months.

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- a cover letter
- resume
- writing sample (5-10 pages)
- three references, including someone you have supervised if relevant

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