

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR New Haven Legal Assistance Association

New Haven Legal Assistance Association (NHLAA), established in 1964 as one of the first legal services programs in the country, is seeking an Executive Director to begin serving in September, 2012. NHLAA has one office, located in downtown New Haven, adjacent to Yale University. This office serves the Greater New Haven, Connecticut area, including the Lower Naugatuck Valley.

### **About NHLAA**

For over 45 years, NHLAA has provided high-quality legal services to persons who cannot obtain such services because of low income, age, disability, or other barriers. NHLAA is dedicated to ensuring equal access to justice and to achieving long-lasting improvement in the rights and living conditions of our client communities. NHLAA provides civil and criminal representation and counseling to thousands of low-income families and individuals each year. We address systemic issues and harms through impact litigation, as well as legislative and policy advocacy. We also provide community education designed to foster our clients' power to advocate for, and protect, their own rights. We work closely with local social services and client advocacy organizations, as well as with the three other legal services programs in Connecticut.

NHLAA currently has 31 employees, including 18 attorneys and 4 paralegals. All non-management staff are members of one of the two unions that represent our workforce.

Many of our attorneys and paralegals have been with the program for over 20 years. Our experienced and dedicated staff are experts in a wide range of poverty law practice areas: housing and homelessness; public benefits and employment; domestic violence and family law; immigration; health law, including Medicaid, Medicare and nursing home matters; special education; Social Security disability law; and civil rights including the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. We also provide representation in certain criminal matters.

NHLAA's annual budget is over \$2 million. Over 50 % of NHLAA's financial support comes from IOLTA and state court filing fees. The balance is primarily grants and financial donations from individuals and law firms. NHLAA does not receive funding from the federal Legal Services Corporation.

NHLAA has a Board of Directors to whom the Executive Director reports. NHLAA also has a Friends Board of Directors that oversees its fund-raising efforts.

NHLAA's current Executive Director, Pat Kaplan, has been with NHLAA for 33 years and has been Executive Director since 1991. She recently announced her retirement effective September, 2012.

## **About This Opportunity**

NHLAA is seeking a creative, talented, and visionary leader who will ensure continuation of our commitment to high quality legal services, social justice, and systemic change. We seek someone who will guarantee the organization's financial sustainability, and its high profile in the general and legal communities in and around New Haven County. We seek an individual who is familiar with the many ways in which technology, including social media, can make the work we do more efficient and effective. Finally, we seek an individual who will provide effective leadership to develop sources of funding as well as legislative and political support for our work, who will assess and adjust management roles within the organization as needed, who will enhance inter-specialty advocacy work, and who will develop new service initiatives that meet the changing needs of our client communities.

## **Position Responsibilities**

### **Vision**

- Articulates and communicates to the Board of Directors, the staff, and the community a vision for the program that is both general and specific.
- Leads and motivates the staff in carrying out that vision.
- Creates and maintains an atmosphere of trust with the board, the staff and the community.
- Prepares NHLAA's Annual Report and other communication materials necessary to tell the program's story in a compelling and comprehensible manner.

### **Fund Raising and Public Relations**

- Works with staff and the Friends Board of Directors to ensure the long-term sustainability of NHLAA through diversified and effective fund raising efforts focused on individual and law firm contributions, foundation grants, government grants and contracts, and events.
- Acts as the chief representative of the agency with respect to public relations, including relationships with the state and local bar associations, the legal community, community groups, the state legislature, the state judicial department, and funding sources.

### **Program Oversight and Financial Management**

- Directs the overall operation of the program in compliance with applicable collective bargaining agreements, federal and state laws, office policies and procedures, requirements of funding sources, and such guidelines and requirements as are set by the Board of Directors.
- Establishes and implements program objectives and priorities in consultation with a management team and by regular communication with staff, both individually and collectively.
- Oversees staff employment and termination, as well as other personnel-related matters of the program.
- Ensures opportunities for the professional development of staff as well as opportunities for advancement.

- Supervises the preparation of the annual budget that reflects existing revenue, requirements of funding sources, and the program's objectives and priorities.
- Understands and oversees financial systems and controls.
- Oversees the technology that makes NHLAA's work efficient and productive, including the development of necessary policies and practices relating to such technology.

## Qualifications

The successful candidate for this position must have at least five years experience in nonprofit management or law-related employment with a demonstrated commitment to public interest law, social justice, and assistance to economically disadvantaged and disenfranchised communities.

Specific skills and background include:

- Ability to direct and oversee NHLAA's services and advocacy program.
- Ability to work well with a diverse, unionized, workforce.
- Commitment to high standards of practice and staff development.
- Ability to direct and oversee the financial planning, budgeting and administration of a \$2 million+ organization.
- Ability to direct fundraising efforts and generate creative and effective fundraising ideas.
- Ability to work productively and collaboratively in partnership with the Board of Directors.
- Ability to collaborate with the executive directors of the other legal services agencies serving Connecticut and to work with the legislature and the judicial department.
- Ability to be an effective communicator; in particular, demonstrate excellent writing skills.
- Ability to represent NHLAA before the legislature, before major funders, and in other public contexts.
- Openness to change and capacity for creative problem solving.

## Salary

NHLAA offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefits package. NHLAA is an equal opportunity employer that welcomes persons of color, women, persons over 40 years of age, LGBT persons and persons with disabilities to apply for this job.

## To Apply

Please submit, by **Monday, March 5, 2012**, a confidential letter of interest with an attached resume and no less than three references to **Carolyn Gontarski at CGontarski@nhlegal.org**. NHLAA may consider late applications if they are submitted before we have filled the position.