



OPEN HANDS
LEGAL SERVICES

Executive Director Opportunity Profile

Overview

Open Hands Legal Services, Inc. is a Christian civil legal aid organization serving New York City. We provide legal assistance and advocacy to low-income New Yorkers by taking volunteer attorneys directly into the community. Currently, we serve approximately 600 low-income New Yorkers annually at 12 partner locations throughout the city. As our Executive Director is stepping down in a few months to address health and family matters, we are seeking a new leader who will build upon the momentum gained since our inception in 2009 and spearhead the continuing expansion of our work to respond to the legal aid crisis in our city.

History

Open Hands Legal Services was founded in 2009 by a group of Christian attorneys who felt God calling them to use their legal skills to serve the city. Recognizing that many problems faced by the poor and the oppressed could be solved by an attorney, the group began going to an East Village soup kitchen to volunteer and provide legal services. Since then, Open Hands has grown dramatically in response to high demand from other community based organizations. We have trained hundreds of practicing attorneys in basic public interest law so they can also volunteer and serve the city with their legal skills.

Vision and Mission

Open Hands' vision is *All lives transformed through the power of justice and hope*. Our mission is to uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed in New York. We break down the legal barriers to our clients' success, enabling them to flourish and embody the full persons they are intended to be. Our services are provided to all people in need, regardless of their beliefs.

The Opportunity

The Executive Director serves as Open Hands' chief executive, exercising overall leadership for the organization and reporting to the Board of Directors. He or she will lead Open Hands in achieving the strategic goals and objectives outlined by the Board of Directors in Open Hands' strategic growth plan. This plan entails the significant expansion of staff, facilities and budget over the next three to five years.



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The Executive Director plans and oversees the provision of legal services to Open Hands' clients and all aspects of the legal services programs. He or she is responsible for financial management and directs Open Hands' operations, human resources, and organizational partnerships. The Executive Director provides direction and supervision to ensure ongoing programmatic excellence, financial health, capacity building and staff development. He or she is responsible for cultivating effective relationships with the Board and key donors. The Executive Director will manage the day-to-day finances of the organization including developing an annual budget, managing an operations budget and providing financial reports to the Board. The Executive Director works closely with the Board to achieve the strategic and fund development goals of the organization.

Qualifications

The Executive Director is a mature Christian, with a heart for God. He or she must demonstrate a relationship with God, and must desire to serve the poor and follow God's commandments to act justly and love mercy. The Executive Director must affirm the Apostles' Creed.

The Executive Director is a trained attorney with the ability to think creatively and strategically about civil legal issues facing low-income individuals. He or she will be comfortable navigating the legal system to fight poverty and pursue justice for our clients. He or she must be curious and eager to listen, learn and stay abreast of the legal issues facing low-income New Yorkers.

The Executive Director currently oversees a team of 5 employees and over 400 volunteers. The Executive Director will lead Open Hands in its growth as it increases its staff, volunteers and partners. The Executive Director is a servant leader who leads by example through listening and influence. He or she demonstrates wisdom, grace, humility and strength in decision-making, actions and communications and works collaboratively with all stakeholders to achieve Open Hands' goals.

The Executive Director must be effective in a variety of public speaking venues, from fundraising events to the boardroom and to the broader public.



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In addition the Executive Director should have the following:

- Minimum of 10+ years of progressively responsible leadership experience in related direct client services field. Legal experience preferred, but not required.
- Reputation as a team builder with demonstrated success leading, motivating and collaborating with a large volunteer base and direct service staff
- Financial acumen – ability to link strategic and operational goals to fiscal realities and program priorities.
- Ability to articulate OHLS’ message to a broad range of constituents and the general public.
- Passion and dedication to OHLS’ mission.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Prudent risk taker/results oriented.
- Innovative/entrepreneurial/creative/high energy.

Process

If after reading this opportunity profile you sense that the gifts and experiences God has given you are a good match for Open Hands Legal Services, we invite you to contact Open Hands’ current Executive Director, Kathleen Slocum or the Chair of the Transition and Search Committee, Tony Telesco for more information and/or to ask questions. Additionally, nominations are welcome.

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