



**OPEN HANDS**  
LEGAL SERVICES

**POSITION DESCRIPTION LEGAL DIRECTOR**

Open Hands Legal Services seeks a Legal Director to set the direction for and lead our legal work. Our vision is the transformation of all lives through the power of justice and hope. Our mission is to uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed in New York City. We bring free legal services directly to community members at host non-profit organizations throughout the city and break down the legal barriers to their success, enabling individuals to flourish and embody the full persons they are intended to be. More information about us is available at [www.openhandslegalservices.org](http://www.openhandslegalservices.org).

Under the leadership of Open Hands Legal Services' Executive Director, the Legal Director will be responsible for the execution of the organization's legal vision, overall caseload, balance of legal priorities, and supervision of legal staff and volunteers. The Legal Director will play a leading role in shaping the continued success and growth of the organization. This is a role that will require leadership and an entrepreneurial, disciplined character, as well as patience and flexibility.

The successful candidate is someone with a passion for social justice who thinks strategically and engages his or her work with flexibility, excellence and the highest standards. S/he is a professing Christian who is deeply committed to Open Hands' mission and values and acts always as an ambassador of our work.

**Duties of the Legal Director**

**Strategy and Policy**

- Provide leadership on organization's legal strategy and policy priorities
- Set goals for OHLS's legal services under the guidance of the Executive Director, and in coordination with legal services staff
- Monitor progress on goals and evaluate outcomes
- Provide oversight of OHLS's caseload of in-house and pro-bono matters
- Keep the Executive Director informed of significant legal developments and consult with the Executive Director on priorities and complex issues and resource requirements

**Training**

- Be responsible for implementing a training program for OHLS staff attorney(s), paralegal(s), legal fellow(s), interns and volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteer attorneys and legal interns are well trained in substantive areas of the law, sound legal practice, and organizational operation
- Provide on-going professional development opportunities for legal staff and ensure staff is up to date on relevant law and policy changes
- Oversee the recruitment, training and mentoring of pro bono attorneys
- Develop and maintain contacts with local law firms and pro bono coordinators

## **Partnerships & Special Projects**

- Lead efforts to facilitate coordination between partner agencies
- Work with partner agencies to coordinate the Legal Aid Desk clinics and Know Your Rights seminar series
- Provide support to staff and partners to ensure success of project or to ensure successful ongoing relationship
- Identify special projects and areas of partnerships that further the goals of OHLS.
- Work with staff to develop goals, identify partners and implement partnerships/projects
- Participate in meetings with other community-based organizations and legal services providers
- Assist the Executive Director in coordinating the Young Professionals Network and conducting fundraising activities, as needed

## **Legal Practice and Supervision**

- Supervise legal staff, including any and all staff attorneys, paralegals, legal fellows and law student interns
- Attend and supervise Legal Aid Desk clinics and Know Your Rights seminars
- Manage all aspects of the legal docket
- Oversee and mentor volunteers and pro bono attorneys as they serve our clients
- Conduct and supervise appearances in civil, supreme and federal court and administrative proceedings, as needed
- Mentor legal staff, provide feedback and monitor quality of work product
- Ensure that the legal program adheres to the highest standards of legal and professional ethics

## **Qualifications**

- Mature Christian faith as defined by the Apostles' Creed
- A strategic, visionary thinker interested in growing Open Hands Legal Services' work and adapting our legal services to the needs of the communities we serve
- 10+ years of progressively responsible experience in the legal profession and at least two years of supervisory experience
- Substantial experience in one or more of the following areas of law: housing, immigration, public-benefits, re-entry
- Prior paid work experience in direct legal services highly preferred
- Demonstrated concern for the needs and rights of low-income communities
- Demonstrated ability to interact with diverse populations in a sensitive and professional manner
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit combined with sacrificial service to our clients and team
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong interpersonal and advocacy skills
- Demonstrated ability to create proactive and defensive legal and policy strategies
- Demonstrated leadership skills, including ability to coordinate with external partners
- Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgment, handle challenging work, and meet deadlines
- Ability to handle a high volume of cases and take initiative is critical

- Proven ability to work with efficiency and flexibility
- A history of patience, kindness, humility and good humor in working with colleagues and low-income clients
- JD from an accredited law school
- Licensed to practice law in New York
- A second language – especially Spanish– is strongly preferred

**Terms**

This position requires evening and weekend meetings and full commitment and support to the OHLS team and community. Salary commensurate with experience.

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**How to Apply**

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to [recruiting@openhandslegalservices.org](mailto:recruiting@openhandslegalservices.org) with “Legal Director” in the subject line. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and must be received by December 1, 2019. Due to the high numbers of applicants for this position, we regret that we can only respond to candidates that we would like to interview.