

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT
PARALEGAL
FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS AND CRIMINAL RECORDS RELIEF
(Internal and External)

For over 50 years, Legal Aid Chicago has provided free civil legal assistance to people living in poverty in metropolitan Chicago. Each year our attorneys, volunteers, and staff help resolve civil legal problems, including domestic violence, consumer fraud, and unfair evictions. Legal Aid Chicago was founded on the philosophy that all individuals are entitled to quality civil legal representation, regardless of their income. We work to ensure that poverty is not an impediment to justice by dismantling the legal barriers that perpetuate inequality. Legal Aid Chicago staff live our mission through our core values of equity, excellence, inclusion, kindness, and respect.

Position: Paralegals work alongside attorneys and directly with clients on legal issues. This full time position will be placed in Legal Aid Chicago's Volunteer Services Unit to support work with community based legal clinics and criminal records relief (e.g., expungement and sealing).

Community Legal clinics: At Legal Aid Chicago's community-based legal clinics, clients meet with volunteer attorneys who interview clients to gather facts. With guidance from Legal Aid Chicago attorneys, the volunteer attorneys advise clients on their legal options and guide them on next steps. The clinics are open to any type of civil matter, operate in the early evening to increase accessibility for clients, and don't require an appointment. Legal Aid Chicago currently operates four community based monthly legal clinics (in North Lawndale, Woodlawn, Humboldt Park, and Uptown) and new clinics are planned for Austin and Englewood. Clinics have been operating virtually during COVID-19, but in-person clinics are expected to resume within a few months.

Expungement and sealing: Legal Aid Chicago serves clients with barriers to employment, education, or housing who seek to have their criminal record expunged or sealed, or with alternative forms of criminal record relief such as certificates of good conduct and healthcare waivers. Clients are screened, registered and advised on how to obtain their rap sheets. Volunteer attorneys prepare the paperwork necessary for filing for the requested expungement, sealing, or other relief. Legal Aid Chicago files the petitions with court and appears in court, if necessary, to obtain the relief for the client and complete the process.

Responsibilities: Under the supervision of Legal Aid Chicago attorneys, duties include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct telephone and in person interviews to determine client eligibility for services and advise clients on how to obtain rap sheets
- Assist with the preparation and filing of paperwork for expungement, sealing or other record relief
- Attend and assist with the operation of community legal clinics
- Ensure smooth operations of the clinics including client registration and volunteer training and recruitment
- Engage and provide administrative support to volunteers and staff at the community legal clinics
- Track data related to grant, pro bono work, and assist on related reporting

Qualifications:

- Undergraduate degree strongly preferred
- The applicant’s personal background, experience, or professional background should reflect an ability to work effectively in cross-cultural situations with clients, co-workers and the community we serve
- Computer proficiency, including familiarity with Microsoft Office applications
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills
- The ability to work well under pressure, and to learn and retain new information
- Availability during evening hours on days when clinics are held is required
- Connection to either Austin neighborhood or Englewood neighborhood is a plus
- Experience working with volunteers is a plus

Salary: Commensurate with experience. Legal Aid Chicago offers a comprehensive benefits package, including low-cost employer-paid health plan options, employer-provided group life and long-term disability insurance, fitness center access, generous paid time off, and much more.

To apply: Send resume, cover letter, and the names and contact information for two professional references to: resume@legalaidchicago.org. Put the phrase “VSU A2J Paralegal” in the subject line of the e-mail. No phone calls please. Position will remain open until filled.

Legal Aid Chicago is firmly committed to creating a diverse workplace and is proud to provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants and therefore does not discriminate on the basis of creed, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age religion, marital or parental status, alienage, disability, political affiliation or belief, military or military discharge status, or ex-offender status. Applicants who have experiences with our client communities are encouraged to apply.