

VITAL IMMIGRANT DEFENSE ADVOCACY & SERVICES [“VIDAS”]

STAFF ATTORNEY – 80 OR 100% TIME

ABOUT VIDAS

VIDAS was founded by grassroots community activists in Sonoma County, CA, to provide immigration law services and advocate for broader rights for immigrants under the law. VIDAS represents immigrants in defense – i.e., in removal proceedings – as well as in affirmative applications for more secure status in the U.S. VIDAS also advocates to change law, policy, and practices to improve the protection of immigrants in the United States, in coalition with Comite VIDA, day labor centers and allies at the local, state and federal levels. VIDAS is a recognized non-profit agency by the Office of Legal Access Programs and has always offered its services at “low bono” rates or pro bono, to ensure maximum access to advocacy. VIDAS has offices in Sonoma and Solano Counties and serves immigrants from Napa, Marin, Lake and Mendocino Counties, as well. Under a recently awarded grant, VIDAS intends to provide free legal representation to low-income immigrants of Sonoma County in removal proceedings.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

VIDAS seeks one Staff Attorney to work with its Senior Attorney in Sonoma County (primarily Santa Rosa) to represent immigrants in removal proceedings in the San Francisco Immigration Court. The Staff Attorney will have office hours in Santa Rosa and will appear in court in San Francisco one to two days per week, generally, representing both detained and non-detained clients in their removal proceedings. VIDAS will consider applicants who are available for four (4) or five (5) days per week for this position.

The Staff Attorney will report to the Legal Director (Senior Attorney) and will have a variety of responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- Provide legal advice and counsel on immigration issues, including participating in immigration clinics and assisting with emergency cases;
- Provide direct representation to detained and non-detained immigrants in bond, master and individual hearings in San Francisco and, possibly, by telephonic appearance in other venues;
- Prepare motions, applications, briefs and exhibits of evidence for advocacy before the Immigration Court, the Board of Immigration Appeals, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Field Office, and U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services;
- Develop and present training/guidance materials on immigration law issues affecting Sonoma County immigrants and their families for Know Your Rights and other community education fora;
- Provide hands-on mentorship to VIDAS paralegal staff, equipping them to work effectively in preparing applications, declarations and other documents needed for representation;
- Assist in oversight of progress on objectives and deliverables for grant reporting, process mapping, and tracking data and outcomes;
- Facilitate cross-referrals with social services, mental health and medical providers;

- Support Legal Director and Executive Director with project management tasks, including reporting, and funder and media relations.

REQUIRED SKILLS

- Member of the California (or possibly other state) bar;
- At least 2 to 5 years of experience practicing immigration law, which should include at least 1 year of representation of clients in removal proceedings, including bond, master and individual hearings;
- Ability to visit jails to interview detained immigrants;
- A strong record of cultural competence and cross-cultural communication skills;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills;
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively;
- Ability to speak, comprehend, read and write in Spanish;
- California driver's license and vehicle for travel between Santa Rosa, San Francisco and northern California jails, as needed.

Salary

Salary range is \$58,000 to \$66,000 for 100% time, depending on experience, prorated if working at 80% time. Benefits include medical insurance and paid leave.

To Apply

- Applications, including a cover letter, resume, legal writing sample and contact information for three professional references, should be emailed to Legal Director Richard Coshnear at: rcoshnear@vidaslegal.org.
- Applications should be submitted as soon as possible. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled, and applicants selected for interviews will be duly notified.
- VIDAS is an EOE committed to inclusive hiring and dedicated to diversity in both its staff and work. The selected applicant will be asked to undergo a background check before acceptance of the final offer.

Richard Coshnear, Legal Director
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