



Job Opportunity Announcement Director of Legal Operations

Every day, people across Illinois are denied the basic rights to which they are entitled under the law simply because they can't afford a lawyer. It's our mission to change that.

Prairie State Legal Services is seeking an experienced, mission-driven leader to fill the role of Director of Legal Operations. This position is responsible for overseeing the legal operations of the organization to ensure consistent and equitable delivery of high-quality legal services. The ideal candidate is a global thinker with exceptional collaborative management skills, the ability to lead with humility and respect, and a record of self-led productivity. The work of the Director of Legal Operations allows the organization to achieve its mission of providing equal access to justice and high quality legal services to some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The Organization

For 45 years, Prairie State Legal Services has served central and northern Illinois by providing a wide-range of legal services to some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, including low-income individuals, older adults, Veterans, and people with disabilities. We focus services on legal problems that impact the ability of our clients to meet their basic human needs, including physical safety, access to healthcare, adequate housing, and financial stability.

PSLS maintains 11 office locations and a standalone telephone counseling service, each led by a Managing Attorney, and has a staff of over 200 employees. Our 36 county service area includes rural communities, suburban areas, and mid-size urban cities which necessitates the development of diverse strategies and we encourage our staff to cultivate and utilize creative approaches to reach and serve our client population. Employees of PSLS benefit from the expertise and community connections of their local office staff along with robust program-wide resources.

PSLS is the only legal aid organization in the majority of our area and we pride ourselves on providing high quality legal services to our clients while supporting a work environment that is motivating, collaborative, and rewarding, with opportunities for professional growth.

Responsibilities

The Director of Legal Operations reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for a combination of people management and legal strategic planning and oversight. Some key responsibilities include:

- Leads the development of all staff within PSLS' legal operations to ensure proficiency in each role and to promote advancement within the organization
- Provides direct support and supervision to the organization's 12 Managing Attorneys with respect to legal matters, including litigation skills, strategy, and procedures, so they can fully develop and support the attorneys within their office
- Supports legal operations staff with the implementation and interpretation of policies that impact the delivery of legal services
- In collaboration with the director group, develops and leads PSLS' legal strategy and direction in a manner that is proactive and not reactive
- Ensures high-quality legal services by monitoring casework and metrics across the legal operations team
- Oversees interviewing, hiring, and onboarding of new direct reports, and supports the interviewing, hiring, and onboarding of other legal operations staff
- Ensures PSLS is current on all changes in the law that affect PSLS and its work and in response adjusts internal legal operations plans, processes, and procedures
- Works with PSLS executive leadership on an on-going basis to identify PSLS' legal priorities in response to the community's legal challenges and create an organization-wide plan to address those priorities

Competencies

- Understands diversity and equity and the issues underserved communities face as they navigate the legal system
- Leads with humility and respect, and consistently demonstrates empathy and compassion
- Excellent organizational skills
- Exemplary interpersonal and relationship-building skills; able to easily build relationships with diverse individuals, from PSLS clients to community partners
- Strong communication skills that make others feel heard and supported
- Ability to inspire and motivate staff to overcome obstacles and continue focusing on the mission of changing community lives
- Exceptional collaborative management skills; has a proven record as a team builder and team leader
- Ability to successfully delegate and direct a team while simultaneously completing their share of the work; is a self-leader with a record of productivity
- Handles adversity with grace, does not take criticism personally, and keeps a sense of perspective
- Exceptional legal practice skills in a variety of complex practice areas

Education/Experience

- Juris Doctor Law Degree (required)
- 10+ years of legal experience (preferred)
- Legal Aid experience
- People management experience
- Understanding of grant funding and grant management for non-profits
- Experience and passion for working with low-income and underserved populations, we will give preference to candidates who have experience providing services to low-income individuals

Perks and Benefits

PSLS is committed to providing an excellent, comprehensive benefits package to its full-time employees that includes:

- Health insurance, including the opportunity to qualify for a wellness credit
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- 403b retirement plan including employer contributions
- Extensive training and education program
- Flex scheduling and partial remote work available
- PTO that starts at 3 weeks/year and increases with additional years worked at PSLS
- Paid sick leave
- 6 weeks of paid parental leave after one year of employment
- 12 paid holidays

Application Details

Please indicate “Director of Legal Operations” in the subject line and email a letter identifying your office preference and explaining your interest and experience, resume, and three references to careers@pslegal.org.

Resumes will be considered on a rolling basis.

Prairie State Legal Services is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment and is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We recruit, employ, pay, and promote qualified applicants and employees without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity, expression, or presentation, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or any other legally protected status.