



Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: FAMILY LAW ATTORNEY

MHLAC is a state agency of the Supreme Judicial Court, created by the legislature in 1973. It seeks an attorney to help discharge its mission of providing legal representation to persons who have or are perceived to have mental health concerns. The person hired will work in our Family Law Project, handling cases involving child custody and parenting time under the supervision of an experienced family law attorney, with whom this person may also collaborate to address systemic child welfare issues.

MHLAC offers free legal assistance to indigent people with mental health challenges throughout the Commonwealth. MHLAC's experienced and talented staff focuses on identifying and addressing issues faced by significant numbers of clients in common. Approaches to solving client problems depend on the issue itself and the best strategy for accomplishing results. Tactics include class-based and targeted individual litigation, as well as legislative, administrative, and public advocacy. MHLAC's family law practice is designed, and specifically funded, to, through individual case advocacy, combat the perception that persons with a psychiatric history cannot effectively parent.

MHLAC is committed to addressing racial equity concerns. In making strategic work choice decisions, priority is given to issues affecting persons with multiple characteristics that expose them to bias (e.g. persons of color who have or are perceived to have mental health concerns). This is consistent with workplace values. MHLAC is committed to creating an inclusive environment that promotes and values racial equity and diversity. We strongly encourage and welcome people of color, people with disabilities, those with personal experience related to mental health concerns, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people with diverse life experiences and backgrounds to apply.

Title: Family Law Attorney

Full/Part Time: Full Time

Position Type: Non-Civil Service / Staff

Confidential: Yes

Salary Range: \$78,160 – 93,892, commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Benefits: Strong package includes access to Massachusetts' excellent retirement plan for State employees.

Main Office Location: 24 School St., Suite 804, Boston, MA 02108 (MHLAC's Main office is relocating to Quincy, MA Dec. 2021)

Work location: Boston/Quincy

Website: www.mhlac.org

Deadline: Applications received after September 3, 2021, may not be considered.

Qualifications

- Experience litigating family law cases preferred but not required;
- Experience in the delivery of legal services to indigent persons preferred;
- Experience with persons with mental health issues, psychiatric disabilities and/or institutionalized persons preferred;
- Ability to work efficiently and multi-task;
- Ability to focus attention on detail in all facets of work (writing, interviewing, case presentation, etc.);
- Ability to work effectively and collaboratively with clients and co-workers under sometimes stressful circumstances;
- Law degree from an accredited law school and eligibility for Massachusetts bar membership required;
- Membership in the Massachusetts bar preferred;
- Fluency in a foreign language used by significant numbers of MHLAC clients a plus;
- Willingness to travel to court hearings and to meet clients required.

Duties

- Screen new requests for legal assistance from indigent persons with a child custody and parenting time case who have or are perceived to have mental health concerns and/or psychiatric disabilities;
- Interview prospective clients and conduct informal investigations to determine whether potential cases are consistent with office priorities and have legal merit;
- Collect and review documents, pleadings, court orders and other materials relevant to review and consideration of cases;
- Provide legal advice, referrals and advocacy in the areas of family law, restraining orders and domestic violence, and in occasional child welfare cases;
- Provide limited assistance representation in some of the aforementioned substantive case areas
- Litigate cases for clients accepted for representation – conduct discovery, engage in motion practice, engage in alternative dispute resolution activities, negotiate with other parties and opposing counsel, and handle trials;

- Interact and collaborate with legal services agencies, volunteer panels, coalitions and others that also are concerned about the rights of people with mental health concerns and/or psychiatric disabilities;
- When called upon, and in concert with MHLAC staff members, engage in litigation or pursue other advocacy approaches, including legislative, administrative, or public advocacy;
- Participate in office processes for determining advocacy priorities and case strategies.
- When called upon, and in concert with the Supervising Attorney, engage in training and presentations regarding the Family Law Project’s advocacy;
- With the assistance of the Supervising Attorney, prepare grant reports and materials to support said reports.

Due to the pandemic, initial and perhaps subsequent interviews will be conducted remotely. It is anticipated that office staff will largely work from remote locations at least into the fall. References and writing samples will be requested of finalists. A criminal background check will be completed for the selected candidate.

How To Apply

Please submit resume and cover letter via email to [hiring@mhlac.org](mailto: hiring@mhlac.org), with the Subject line – “Family Law Attorney position”

Email submissions are strongly encouraged. We will accept submissions mailed or faxed to our office and Ms. Morgan Nowatkowski can be contacted at [mnowatkowski@mhlac.org](mailto: mnowatkowski@mhlac.org) if further accommodations are necessary:

Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
24 School Street, Suite 804
Boston, MA 02108
ATTN: Hiring

617-338-2347 FAX

The Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As the representative of the Commonwealth and its residents, the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee strives to ensure that those working in our office reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. The Committee encourages applicants from a broad spectrum of backgrounds to apply for positions. We will gladly assist applicants who need reasonable accommodation.