Supervising Attorney (Family Defense Unit) - White Plains, NY - Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

http://www.lshv.org

Job Type: Family Defense Unit - Supervising Attorney
Schedule Type: Full-Time
Date: January 27, 2020

Overview
Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) is a 50-year-old non-profit organization dedicated to providing free, high-quality legal counsel in civil matters where basic human needs are at stake. Our services support more than 545,000 poor and low-income families and individuals who cannot afford an attorney in our seven-county service area. LSHV is proud to have handled more than 15,500 cases impacting more than 36,000 household members including 14,000 children last year. LSHV has eight offices, a staff of 136, including 82 attorneys and 27 paralegals.

As part of a collaboration with Westchester County and NYS’s Indigent Legal Services, LSHV is launching a new Family Defense Unit (FDU) as a Model Program to provide holistic and comprehensive interdisciplinary legal services to families with child welfare matters. LSHV’s FDU will represent parents in child welfare proceedings in Family Court including Article 10 cases and related custody, visitation, as well as permanency planning and termination of parental rights cases. The FDU will also work to prevent placement of children in foster care by advocating for parents at the earliest stages of child welfare engagement including at the investigation stage and by litigating emergency removal hearings. Using a ground-breaking and nationally recognized approach to assisting parents, the Supervising Attorney will be part of a team which includes a staff attorney, social worker and parent advocate in every matter ensuring that parents obtain the benefits and services they need to keep their families safe and stable. The FDU Supervisor will be part of LSHV’s holistic client-centered civil team which will ensure that Families in crisis receive a full range civil legal services support from LSHV including legal assistance with public benefits, housing, disability and domestic violence.

Job Description
Legal Services of the Hudson Valley (LSHV) has an immediate opening for a full-time Supervising Attorney to be part of the Family Defense Unit (FDU) to represent parents who are accused of neglect and abuse in investigations, administrative hearings, Article 10, Permanency Planning, and Termination of Parental Rights matters as well as other related family court matters in the White Plains, Yonkers, and New Rochelle Family Courts. The position will be based out of the White Plains Office but will require travel throughout Westchester County and appearances in all three Family Courts.

Reporting to the Attorney-in-Charge of the White Plains Office, the FDU Supervising Attorney is responsible for the oversight, management, development and evaluation of LSHV’s FDU Practice, which includes 2 Staff Attorneys, 2 Social Workers and 2 Parent Advocates. The FDU Supervisor will review and assign all FDU cases as well as identify practice trends in Family Defense cases. The FDU Supervisor will also accompany Staff Attorneys to court, provide support in administrative hearings and litigation and act as co-counsel on complex cases. Additionally, the Supervisor will devise and oversee coordinated Family Defense outreach throughout service area and ensure delivery of high-quality legal work throughout LSHV’s Family Defense Practice. Furthermore, the Supervisor will conduct regular case reviews with case handlers and provide guidance on maintaining complete case files, review all closed cases, and partner with the Attorney-in-Charge overseeing the FDU.

The FDU Supervisor will also carry a reduced case load and will advise and counsel clients about their rights during investigations which necessarily includes explaining the process and attendant laws, preparing clients for interactions with CPS and other system actors, and guiding them through the decision-making process (including, where applicable, counseling clients regarding voluntary placement of the child with relatives and other suitable caregivers); attend interviews and meetings with clients and CPS and/or other system actors, as necessary; and negotiate with CPS to avoid court action and achieve meaningful service plans. The Supervisor
will also engage in a full range of child welfare litigation handling cases at every stage. The Supervisor will actively participate with the multidisciplinary team in developing an effective case management plan. The person hired will also be expected to adhere to program and case handling standards, funder requirements, the highest professional standards, and be available as a resource to LSHV staff and access to justice communities.

Requirements
- Member in good standing of the New York State Bar;
- Ten or more years of legal experience preferably in Family Law and/or child welfare matters, including litigation, or its equivalent; ability to provide high-quality zealous representation in high-stakes cases and the ability to conduct hearings on short notice;
- Excellent people skills;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; Ability to work effectively with a diverse group of stakeholders. Proven writing and editing skills;
- Strong Organizational Skills;
- Ability to collaborate in a multidisciplinary team with other attorneys, legal professionals, social workers, government agencies and other service providers;
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for the work of defending parents in Child Welfare Proceedings and Investigations;
- Flexible work attitude, enthusiasm for the mission of LSHV;

Preferred
- Previous supervisory or management experience;
- Demonstrated commitment to serving low-income persons with prior experience in legal services or similar program;
- English/Spanish bilingual.
- Valid driver's license and access to a car

Salary: DOE, with excellent benefits.

Please apply at our career center through the following link, and include a cover letter, writing sample and references:

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Legal Services of the Hudson Valley is proud to be an equal opportunity employer that celebrates our employees’ differences. Applicants of diverse race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability and veteran status, are strongly encouraged to apply. Our differences make us better