IMMIGRATION RIGHTS ATTORNEY

Yonkers, N.Y. office- Full-time, Exempt position

Empire Justice Center, a highly respected, statewide legal services organization, is seeking an Immigrant Rights Attorney to join our Unaccompanied Minors Program practice. This is an opportunity to join one of the most effective organizations serving low-income individuals and families in New York State.

Empire Justice Center attracts and employs dedicated, determined, and passionate advocates who, together, make a significant impact on the lives of low-income New Yorkers. We achieve our successes through direct legal representation and high-impact litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, and by providing training and technical assistance to other advocates who are working towards the same goals. Our organization offers staff an exciting and dynamic employment opportunity and a strong commitment to teamwork, diversity, and personal/professional development.

The Immigrant Rights Attorney will be a critical member of our growing Immigration Practice and under the Acacia Center for Justice program’s Unaccompanied Children’s Program, a recently created initiative funded by the Acacia Center for Justice will provide legal services to young people who are or have been, in federal custody under the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). In addition to immigration legal services, the UMP staff attorney will defend the rights of young people to family unity, safety, and bodily integrity while in government custody, and other emergent legal needs of immigrant youth. The position includes extensive contact with youth, including youth who have suffered abuse, abandonment, neglect, or other trauma.

The Position:

We anticipate hiring a team of 4-5 new staff to work on this project and to join our current staff of immigration lawyers, and paralegals in Hudson Valley. Staffing will include two immigrant rights attorneys and two immigrant rights paralegals. The Immigrant Rights Attorney will work under the supervision of a Managing Attorney, and alongside a second Immigrant Rights Attorney and two paralegals.

The primary focus of this position will be to provide legal assistance to mostly Spanish-speaking unaccompanied minors in the lower Hudson Valley. This position is based in our Yonkers office and will serve Westchester and the surrounding counties. Clients will be primarily located in Poughkeepsie. Court appearances will include remote appearances as well as in-person appearances, including Family Court appearances in Duchess and Orange Counties.

Primary responsibilities will include:
- Providing direct representation to unaccompanied minors in immigration and family matters before USCIS, EOIR, and state family courts including.
- Removal proceedings and appeals
- Proceedings seeking a child’s recognized lawful status in the United States
- Ancillary family court proceedings (SUS)
- Naturalization and adjustment of status
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.
- U Visa petitions
- Asylum applications and hearings
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitions
- Federal Court appeals
- Administrative Appeals
- Other immigration and civil matters
- Provide legal services to children who are detained in Office of Refugee Resettlement shelters in the lower Hudson Valley. Core services include legal intake interviews, bond hearings for youth seeking less restrictive custody, federal litigation for separated youth seeking immediate family reunification, and referrals to and collaboration with other legal service or litigation organizations as needed to protect the rights of youth in federal custody.
- Appear as friend-of-the-court and record counsel at regularly detained dockets in immigration court to provide case updates for youth pending release from ORR custody.
- Participating in community outreach and client educational events.
- Maintain electronic and paper case files, monthly statistics and case reports, and other reporting to stakeholders.
- Train, mentor, and manage legal interns, fellows, and volunteers for work on individual cases, presentations, legal screenings, and related work.
- Responding to urgent matters involving unaccompanied minors.
- Participating in other community events as appropriate.
- Visiting clients in foster care and detention facilities and overseeing “Know Your Rights” and other programming presented by the attorney and/or other staff.
- other duties as assigned.

Preferred Qualifications:
- Be admitted to practice law in New York.
- Have experience in trauma-informed representation and representation of minors.
- Be able to communicate in a way that is clear and supportive to young clients.
- Have at least 2-5 years of relevant work experience.
- Be able to produce high-quality written material, meet tight deadlines, and work both independently and as part of a team.
- Have strong analytical and writing skills.
- Be experienced in interviewing and counseling clients in both English and Spanish.
• Be willing and able to serve a geographically wide-spread area.
• An attorney hired for this position must have a driver’s license and access to a vehicle for frequent trips to children’s detention facilities. Mileage and tolls will be reimbursed.

Salary and Benefits:

The range of salary is from $61,700 to $65,700. Salary is commensurate with experience and based on the organization’s salary scale. Empire Justice Center offers a generous benefit package, including health insurance, life insurance, a 403b retirement plan, vacation, holiday, and sick time. We are an organization that supports and encourages a work/life balance.

Empire Justice Center is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and desires a diverse and inclusive workforce. Empire Justice Center provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age (40 or older), sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

TO APPLY:
Applications will be accepted until filled. If interested e-mail a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and three professional references to (no phone calls or hard copies please) Incomplete applications will not be considered.

employment@empirejustice.org