I. Organization Information

Empire Justice Center, a diverse and highly respected, statewide legal services organization, seeks a Staff Attorney for our Immigration Practice Group. This is an opportunity to join and grow in one of the most influential organizations serving marginalized low-income individuals and families in New York State.

Empire Justice Center attracts and employs a diverse team of dedicated, determined, and passionate advocates who significantly impact the lives of low-income New Yorkers. We succeed through direct legal representation high-impact litigation, and legislative and administrative advocacy. Additionally, the organization provides top-notch training and technical assistance to other advocates to ensure fairness and justice for New Yorkers. The organization thrives on our commitment to supporting justice for populations historically and currently experiencing high levels of oppression. These populations include racially diverse individuals and families experiencing poverty, housing insecurity, immigration issues, and domestic violence. Additionally, the organization advocates for people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, and school-age children facing discrimination and violations of their civil rights in schools.

With offices in Rochester, Albany, Westchester County, and Long Island, our organization offers staff an exciting and dynamic inclusive working environment with a strong commitment to work/life balance, teamwork, diversity, wellness, and personal/professional development.
II. Position Summary

The Staff Attorney in the Immigration Practice Group under the Acacia contract will provide representation and advice to unaccompanied minors, including representation in immigration court and family court. This attorney will visit clients at the Mercy First Detention Center run by ORR and advocate for their asylum in the United States and release them to families and other appropriate guardians. Fluency in Spanish is preferred.

III. Essential Duties and Responsibilities

• The attorney may represent child immigrants in any and each of the following:
  o U Visa petitions
  o Federal Court appeals
  o Administrative Appeals
  o Removal proceedings and appeals
  o Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.
  o Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
  o Naturalization and adjustment of status
  o Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitions
  o Proceedings seeking a child’s recognized lawful status in the United States.

• For transactional matters, the attorney will prepare, file, and represent the client in the indicated matter (e.g. prepare, file, and represent the child in a Form I-589, application for asylum and withholding of removal; or prepare, file, and represent a child in a Form I-360, Petition for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status).

• For litigation matters, the attorney will represent the client in all facets of the Court proceeding in Immigration Court, NYS Family Court, or any other Court, by filing motions, briefs, defensive applications, affirmative applications, presenting evidence, examining witnesses, etcetera.

• Responding to urgent matters involving unaccompanied minors.

• Maintaining electronic and paper case files, monthly statistics and case reports, and other reporting to stakeholders.

• Training, mentoring, and managing legal interns, fellows, and volunteers for work on individual cases, presentations, legal screenings, and related work.

• Visiting clients in foster care and detention facilities and overseeing “Know Your Rights” and other programming presented by the attorney and/or other staff.

• Appearing 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.

• Provide legal services to children 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, and federal litigation for separated youth seeking immediate family reunification.
Mercy FirstShelter. 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.

- Participating in other community events as appropriate.
- Participating in community outreach and client educational events.
- Please note that if the need arises, all positions will supervise other members of the practice group.
- Other duties as assigned by your supervisor and/or to meet the organization’s needs. Please note that because Empire Justice Center is a nonprofit legal services organization, our resources are limited, all staff are expected to perform administrative and other support-related duties as needed to serve our clients and fulfill our mission.

IV. Minimum Qualifications (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities)

- Litigation
- Report Writing
- Legal Research
- Microsoft Office
- Client Experience
- Case Management
- Document Drafting
- Administrative Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Problem Management
- Appointment Scheduling
- Ability to Work on A Team
- Strong Communication Skills
- Minimum of 3 years professional legal experience.
- Juris Doctorate Degree from an accredited US law school or international equivalent
- Admission to the New York State Bar and in good standing as a member of the bar

V. Salary

Salary is dependent on years of experience and based on the organizational pay scale. The beginning salary for this position, with 3 years of experience, is $64,500, and the salary for this position, with 5 years of experience, is $68,580.
VI. Benefits

We are an organization that supports and encourages a work/life balance. Empire Justice Center offers a generous benefit package including:

- Health insurance (employer pays 100% premium for a high quality, co-pay insurance plan).
- 403(b) eligibility with 1% employer match and additional employer contribution.
- 3% Non-Elective Annual Contribution made by Empire Justice Center.
  - Benefit eligible after 12 months of employment.
- Generous vacation, sick, personal, and holiday time
  - 14 Paid Holidays
  - Vacation PTO: 10.5 Hours/Month; Sick PTO: 7 Hours/Month; Personal PTO: 5 Days/Year
- Bilingual salary enhancement for qualifying employees.
- Loan Repayment Assistance Program.
- Voluntary Supplemental Disability.
- Dental Insurance (employee paid).
- Vision Insurance (employee paid).
- $150K Group Term Life Insurance.
- Generous Bereavement Leave.
- 35-hour full-time work week.
- NYS Short-Term Disability.
- FSA Eligibility.

Empire Justice Center is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and strongly desires a diverse and inclusive workforce. Empire Justice Center provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants. It prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type, specifically - race, color, religion, age (40 or older), sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, disability status, genetics, neurodiversity, 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 the position is filled. If interested, e-mail a resume, writing sample, and contact information for three professional references aware of this application to employment@empirejustice.org. Please include “Staff Attorney, Immigrant Rights, First/Last Name” in the subject line of the email. No phone calls or hard copies, please.

If reasonable accommodations are needed, please contact Mercedece Love, Human Resources and Compliance Coordinator at mlove@empirejustice.org. Empire Justice Center is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals. As part of this commitment, Empire Justice Center ensures that persons with disabilities and/or communication barriers are provided with reasonable accommodations.