Staff Attorney, Tenant Advocacy
Central Islip, Long Island

Employment Status: Full-Time
FLSA Status: Exempt
Practice Group: Tenant Advocacy

I. Organization Information

Empire Justice Center, a diverse and highly respected, statewide legal services organization, seeks a Staff Attorney for our Tenant Advocacy 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

Empire Justice Center is pleased to announce an opening for a Staff Attorney for our Tenant Advocacy Practice Group. This position will represent tenants in eviction proceedings on Long Island, primarily in Nassau County, while collaborating with the Tenant Advocacy Paralegal and Tenant Advocacy Team to expedite client intake and case development.

III. Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment to assist clients who often need rapid responses.
- Assist in community education efforts, including creating written materials and presentations.
- Provide legal representation to tenants in eviction proceedings in housing courts in Nassau and Suffolk counties.
- Work closely with a paralegal and the Tenant Advocacy Team to expedite client intake and case development.
- Access to reliable transportation capable of traveling to housing courts on Long Island, particularly Suffolk County.
- Experienced and skilled in providing legal advice in a language that is accessible to the client or eager to develop this skill.
- Maintain a docket of housing cases, including but not limited to holdover and nonpayment summary proceedings for eviction.
- Collaborate actively with the advocates and attorneys from partnering organizations to find other resources to preserve clients' housing.
- Provide advice and representation to low-income tenants and tenant associations in neighborhoods facing strong displacement pressure.
- Work closely with the Tenant Advocacy team to identify and assist with related legal needs that these clients may have, including immigration issues, services for crime victims, access to public benefits, and civil rights in housing and language access.
- Impact litigation support, as needed.
- 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.
- Legal Research.
- Microsoft Office.
- Client Experience.
- Document Drafting.
- Case Management.
- Ability to Work on a Team.
- Strong Communication Skills.
- Minimum 1 year of legal practice 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 1 year of experience, is $60,580, and the salary for this position, with 10 years of experience, is $78,580.

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, Tenant Advocacy, 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.