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**Decriminalization Program Director**

**Location: Flexible**

**Start Date: Early 2023**

The National Homelessness Law Center (Law Center) seeks a strategic, mission-driven attorney to serve as our Decriminalization Program Director. The Law Center is the legal arm of the national movement to end homelessness and is looking for a leader compelled by the national housing crisis and energized by our vision of housing as a human right and commitment to dismantling structural racism.

**BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF POSITION:**

The Decriminalization Program Director will direct the Law Center's legal and policy work focused on ending the criminalization of homelessness and advancing the human right to housing, in collaboration with the Legal Director. The Decriminalization team, comprised of a Staff Attorney, Equal Justice Works Fellow, Law Center Justice Fellow, and soon-to-be-hired NYC team consisting of a Senior Attorney and Communications Associate, builds on the Law Center's national Housing Not Handcuffs (HNH) campaign. The HNH Campaign launched in 2015 to support litigation and policy advocacy nationwide to challenge and repeal laws criminalizing homelessness, while advancing housing solutions to homelessness. The Decriminalization Program Director will serve as co-counsel in Law Center decriminalization cases in partnership with local and pro bono co-counsel, support decriminalization policy reform efforts at the local, state, and national levels, and manage the work of the other staff on the Decriminalization team.

This is an ideal opportunity for an attorney who thrives in a values-aligned organization. The Law Center's budget for 2023 is \$2.2 million. The Law Center is financially sound and maintains a reserve.

**ABOUT THE LAW CENTER:**

Founded in 1989, the Law Center is the leading national organization using the power of the law to advocate for the millions of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability in the United States. Our work has put unhoused children back in school, won new resources for affordable housing, prevented homelessness for renters, overturned laws that criminalize homelessness, and built support for the human right to housing, now a major component of federal domestic policy. We play a critical role in protecting, defending and promoting the rights of unhoused persons to ensure they can lead national, state and local efforts to end homelessness.

Our core conviction is that no one should have to go without safe, affordable housing in a country as wealthy as ours. The Law Center's work, in partnership with national, state and local partners, is critical now more than ever as the eviction and affordable housing crises, exacerbated by the pandemic, push record numbers of persons into homelessness. People of color, people living with disabilities, women and members of the LGBTQ+ community are disproportionately and uniquely affected by homelessness, and our work consciously and affirmatively seeks to address these

interrelated inequities. The Law Center elevates the power and voices of persons with lived expertise in working toward systems change.

We are proud of our high quality and committed team of 11 staff persons and 3 VISTAs, as well as our large corps of volunteer attorneys. Although headquartered in Washington, DC, staff live and work across the country. In April 2021, the Law Center welcomed its second Executive Director, Antonia Fasanelli, a national leader recognized for her expertise in housing and homelessness law and policy.

For more information, read our Annual Reports (<https://homelesslaw.org/resources/annual-report/>) and explore our website at [www.homelesslaw.org](http://www.homelesslaw.org).

### **KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Supervise and lead Decriminalization team attorneys, communications staff, pro bono teams, and/or interns and fellows to advance the project;
- Lead the Law Center's co-counseling and technical assistance efforts in cases related to our priorities to decriminalize homelessness and promote the human right to housing, including identifying and developing opportunities for litigation; conducting pre-litigation factual and legal research; and executing trial or appellate advocacy, all in coordination with local and pro bono partners;
- Foster and serve the Law Center's efforts to decriminalize homelessness and promote housing as a human right through local, state, and federal policy efforts, providing technical assistance and growing its collaboration with local grassroots, policy, and legal advocates;
- Facilitating discussions in our [HNH Justice Network](#);
- Write reports, legal memoranda, advocacy letters, fact sheets, and other materials to support the Law Center's work;
- Conduct strategic communications to conveying Campaign messaging through our website, newsletters, social media, webinars and in-person trainings, as well as responding to reporters and traditional media and providing testimony to legislators;
- Provide supervision to the Equal Justice Fellow developing the Legal Defense Clinics project in collaboration with the Western Regional Advocacy Project;
- Provide input to the Development Team to help write and report on grants for program work;
- Collaborate with the Legal Director on annual and strategic planning for the program and track and evaluate results; and
- Collaborate with other Law Center staff on cross-organizational priorities.

### **WHO YOU ARE:**

- You have a J.D. and are an attorney admitted and in good standing in at least 1 US jurisdiction.
- You have at least 8 years of attorney experience with relevant policy or litigation experience.
- You have substantial litigation experience on behalf of economically-disadvantaged populations, including challenging the criminalization of homelessness. Class-action or systemic impact litigation experience is a plus.
- You have experience working with directly-impacted individuals and grassroots organizations on organizing, network, or campaign-building.
- You have experience managing a small team.
- You enjoy taking initiative, and you think strategically and creatively.
- You have an understanding of international human rights frameworks and share our belief that all human beings have the right to a basic standard of living that includes safe, affordable housing, healthcare, and freedom from discrimination and cruelty.
- You have a positive and constructive attitude.
- You write clearly and accessibly, and have experience editing others writing.

- You enjoy multi-tasking and thrive in a collaborative and fast-paced work environment.
- You have a justice-oriented understanding for how race and power impact relationships, organizational culture and partnerships. You are committed to a personal and professional practice around deepening this understanding, through continuous learning, reflection and growth.
- You have experience in a social justice nonprofit. Any prior work experience in the housing justice and/or homeless-rights fields or relevant life experience is a plus.
- You have flexibility for occasional travel.

**SALARY, BENEFITS AND LOCATION:**

**Salary:** The attorney will be paid in accordance with the Law Center’s salary scale for attorneys based on years of experience. The scale for senior attorneys begins at a salary of \$87,500 for attorneys with 8 years of experience and increases by a salary step for each year of experience thereafter.

**Benefits:** Health, Dental, Vision, Life, Short and Long-term Disability Insurance all fully employer paid and a 403(b) retirement plan with supplemental salary contribution. The Law Center provides a leave package of vacation (20 days per year), sick leave (10 days per year), personal leave (5 days per year), and all Federal holidays. In addition, the Law Center also closes two weeks per year. The Law Center has flexible work schedule options.

**Location:** The Law Center staff are primarily working remotely due to COVID-19. We are headquartered in Washington, DC, but staff are located around the country. Occasional travel to DC or other locations may be required.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE:**

Send cover letter and resume to [HR@homelesslaw.org](mailto:HR@homelesslaw.org) with “Decriminalization Program Director, Last Name\_First Name” in the subject line. No phone calls, please.

The Law Center is an equal opportunity employer. The Law Center values an inclusive, diverse workplace and does not unlawfully discriminate on any basis prohibited by law. The Law Center encourages applications from all interested persons of any race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, personal appearance, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, or any other legally protected status.

**APPLICATIONS DEADLINE:** We seek to fill this position as soon as possible. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until filled.