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Job Description

Staff Attorney

Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids – New Bedford

An exciting opportunity to provide legal representation for at-risk children within a growing program of a leading non-profit, public interest law firm.

The Opportunity

HLA is a dynamic non-profit, public interest law firm whose mission is to provide pro bono legal services to low-income Massachusetts residents having difficulty accessing or paying for health care. Founded in 1996, HLA provides individual representation and advice for more than 700 clients annually. HLA also engages in system-wide litigation, public policy advocacy and educational programming to advance its goals.

HLA's Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids) diverts children with unmet mental health needs from the juvenile justice system and helps them access treatment. MHAP for Kids attorneys are embedded in Family Resource Centers where they help at-risk youth overcome barriers to treatment in school systems, state agencies, and the court system. A Boston University study of MHAP for Kids found that the program improves the health of children and their families. MHAP for Kids received state funds to continue this work in the Family Resource Centers in FY'18 and FY'19. HLA seeks to expand MHAP for Kids statewide.

Health Law Advocates (HLA) seeks a highly qualified, motivated lawyer with knowledge of the juvenile court, mental health and/or education systems to join the talented MHAP for Kids team as our Staff Attorney serving New Bedford. This attorney, like our attorneys serving in our MHAP for Kids offices in Lowell, Lynn and Boston, will advocate for children across the court, mental health and school systems to ensure that their mental health needs are met and their legal rights are protected. The Staff Attorney will advocate for up to 30 youth at a time.

The MHAP for Kids Staff Attorney: Responsibilities

The Staff Attorney will be a member of HLA's MHAP for Kids team of talented advocates and report to the Director/ Managing Attorney. The primary day-to-day responsibility of the position is to provide legal representation for youth with unmet mental health needs.

More specific activities include:

- Meeting with clients
- Conducting legal research and writing
- Analyzing education, medical and court records
- Developing and maintaining strong working relationships with staff of the host Family Resource Center operated by the United Way of Greater New Bedford
- Developing and maintaining strong working relationships with state agencies, such as: DCF, DMH, DYS, as well as other stakeholders in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems
- Managing case files
- Promoting MHAP for Kids in the community
- Participating in program evaluation

The MHAP for Kids Staff Attorney: Qualifications

Minimum Requirements Include:

- Juris Doctor Degree
- 4+ years of relevant work experience
- Excellent communication skills, including oral advocacy and writing skills
- A strong understanding of the juvenile court
- A strong understanding of children's mental health systems
- Strong advocacy skills

Other Preferred Qualifications:

- Track record of effectively collaborating with government and community-based service agencies
- Demonstrated cultural competence
- Proven ability to handle a substantial caseload
- Knowledge of the communities served by the New Bedford Family Resource Center
- Bilingual/Trilingual skills (English, Spanish and Portuguese)

Benefits

This position includes a robust benefits package including competitive salary (based on experience and other qualifications), comprehensive health insurance and a generous paid leave policy.

To apply, submit a cover letter and resume by email to jobs@hla-inc.org. Resumes will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Health Law Advocates is an AA/EO Employer. People of color, LGBTQ identified people, gender nonconforming people, individuals with disabilities, veterans and people who speak a language in addition to English are encouraged to apply.