

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. ®



We provide free legal aid to people with civil legal problems in western New York.

www.lawny.org

SOROS JUSTICE ADVOCACY FELLOWSHIP

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. ® (LawNY) is a not-for-profit law firm providing free legal services to eligible clients in civil cases through 7 regional offices covering a 14-county area in Western New York. LawNY receives funding from the Legal Services Corporation, New York State Office of Court Administration, Interest on Lawyer Accounts (IOLA) Fund of the State of New York, United Way, AmeriCorps, Equal Justice Works and numerous municipalities, foundations and donors. Our workforce includes approximately 145 attorneys, paralegals and support staff.

Since 2005, LawNY's Rochester office has assisted over 2000 individuals who exit the correctional system or have past criminal convictions who experience legal barriers to employment. From 2015-2019, advocates have secured over \$319,000 in financial benefits for clients. We have prioritized this population within LawNY's other practice groups, and we partner with a variety of organizations to ensure that the needs of individuals reentering society are met holistically. Employment-related legal services offered include: enforcement of New York state laws prohibiting discriminatory hiring practices against persons with criminal records; state agency denial of occupational licenses or criminal background clearances required for employment in the sectors requiring state or federal approval to work (there are over 100 occupations in New York that require a license, registration, or certification by a state agency); obtaining certificates of rehabilitation that may be required to obtain employment; enforcement of consumer protections that may serve as a barrier to securing employment; overcoming barriers to employment due to indicated reports from Child Protective Services; and removal from state agencies lists barring employment.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The LawNY Rochester office is seeking to host a candidate for an 18-month Soros Fellowship beginning between July and November 2020 with a focus on reentry and post-incarceration issues. Candidates will propose and develop their own projects. Selection for the fellowship is made by the program-- not by LawNY. The Soros Justice Advocacy Fellowships support outstanding individuals — including lawyers, advocates, grassroots organizers, researchers, and others with unique perspectives — to undertake U.S. criminal justice reform projects at the local, state, and national levels.

QUALIFICATIONS

- ? JD anticipated by May 2020 or recent law school graduate.
- ? A desire to increase access to justice through excellent legal representation, advocacy and service.
- ? Applicants should have a demonstrated commitment to working with individuals reentering society from incarceration and those with criminal records.
- ? Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- ? Fluency in Spanish is a preference but not a requirement.

Advocacy Track I Fellowship applicants must have at least two (2) years of relevant experience, which may include: full-time and part-time employment; paid or unpaid internships; sustained volunteer work; or other pertinent experience (e.g. advocacy while incarcerated). Advocacy Track I is for people at a range of phases in their careers, including but not limited to: people just entering the field following post-graduate education; advocates with a few years of work experience; and those beginning to work on criminal justice reform issues after a career in another field or after some other life experience. Individuals who are between the ages of 18– 25 and who have fewer than two years' experience should consider applying for the Soros Justice Youth Activist Fellowships.

Applicants must be able to devote at least 35 hours per week to the project if awarded a fellowship; and the project must be the applicant's only full-time work during the course of the fellowship. Fellows cannot be full-time students during their fellowships.

COMPENSATION

Advocacy Track I Soros Justice Advocacy fellowships have an award of \$87,000, plus project-related expenses, over 18 months. LawNY provides an excellent benefits package including health, dental and vision insurance, disability coverage, a flexible and accommodating work schedule, and numerous opportunities for professional development and other benefits.

PROCEDURE

Applicants should email a cover letter of interest, a resume, and the names of (3) references together with their proposals to the attention of Kelly McGovern, Esq., Director of Pro Bono Affairs, at kmcgovern@lawny.org. All proposals and applications must be received by September 18, 2019.

LawNY encourages applications from diverse candidates. LawNY welcomes applications regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or any other consideration protected by law.

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