

## **REICI Paralegal (Race Equity In Corrections Initiative)**

### **Who We Are**

Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS) is a nonprofit legal services organization founded in 1972 whose mission is to challenge the carceral system through litigation, advocacy, client counseling, partnership with impacted individuals and communities, and outreach to policy makers and the public. The office prioritizes work involving health and mental health care, assaults by staff, extreme conditions of confinement (including COVID, overcrowding, exorbitant prison phone rates), misuse of segregation and isolation, and race equity.

At PLS we seek for our team to reflect our organizational values of justice, race equity, and community. This includes hiring staff with connection to the communities we serve, where feasible, and a commitment to strive for justice and equity in our hiring practices and in our staff culture.

### **Position Summary**

PLS seeks a full-time Paralegal to join our race equity team, REICI.

REICI is an organization-wide effort to eliminate institutional racism and its impact on Black and Brown prisoners in the day-to-day operations of Massachusetts' prisons and jails. REICI's mission is to build awareness, solutions, and leadership to combat the discriminatory treatment of Black and Brown prisoners in correctional operations through client and legislative advocacy; community building and education; and litigation.

Paralegals play a critical role as key members of PLS' staff. The REICI Paralegal will engage in systemic, multi-forum legal advocacy and community engagement with duties including but not limited to litigation support and direct advocacy for BIPOC prisoner clients and their families with prison officials, medical and mental health providers.

Although this position will have flexibility to work from home, it will require some physical presence at the office, an ability to visit clients in prison and to attend required meetings in the community.

### **Responsibilities**

- Providing support to REICI Team
- Taking telephone calls and reading mail from prisoners
- Reviewing and evaluating intakes to determine if they warrant investigation
- Meeting with and interviewing BIPOC prisoners at state prisons and county jails in Massachusetts, including photographing their injuries or health conditions

- Investigating new and ongoing intakes, tracking all investigations and ensuring they are completed in as timely a manner as possible
- Visiting and interviewing prisoner witnesses
- Counseling and advising clients about their legal rights
- Creating and maintaining client files and keeping databases updated
- Assisting in planning regular meetings, preparing and presenting summaries of investigated cases at meetings for litigation consideration
- Conducting legal research, working on litigation/casework, and assisting in case referrals, as assigned
- Assisting in improving systems and standard operating procedures
- Participating in monthly PLS staff meetings, committee meetings and regular supervision meetings
- Compile statistics for grant writing and reporting
- All other tasks as assigned

### **Other Qualifications**

- Certification or associate's degree in paralegal studies (bachelor's degree is preferred)
- A minimum experience of two years in a paralegal or administrative role
- Knowledge or experience with carceral institutions and mass incarceration is preferred
- Must have a thorough understanding of racial justice and systemic and institutional racial bias
- Sensitivity to issues and concerns of communities of color, intersectionality and other diverse groups is required
- Experience engaging in difficult conversations with individuals and groups around race, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Thrives in multiracial work environment
- Must demonstrate strong writing and advocacy skills
- Proactive, self-directed, and able to multitask effectively
- Organizational and administrative skills are required
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving abilities
- Strong attention to detail
- Must be comfortable having frequent contact with incarcerated clients through visits, telephone and letter and advocating for their needs.
- Travel to Massachusetts prisons and jails is required.
- Applicants must have a valid driver's license and regular access to a car is preferred by not required.

### **When you join our team**

You can expect to work with a team of amazing people who have tenacity and are

committed to getting the work done because our work is urgent, impactful, and more important than ever.

You can count on doing solutions-oriented and policy-driven work. We ask difficult questions and entertain unconventional answers so we can reckon with the uncomfortable truths of our work.

You will have excellent benefits and a great work-life balance. Driving meaningful change is hard work. We value the importance of self-care.

## **Compensation**

This is a full-time position, requiring 35 hours per week. Salary is commensurate with years of experience, based on a salary scale.

We offer a comprehensive compensation package with 12 paid holidays, a minimum of 16 paid vacation days, 12 sick days, and 4 personal days each year, as well as paid parental and family medical leave benefits and a partially-paid sabbatical every 7 years.

We pay 100% of employee premiums for excellent health, vision, and dental benefits plus 100% of the out-of-pocket deductible.

We also offer a 401(k) retirement benefit with employer contribution, disability and life insurance, and a student loan repayment assistance program.

## **How to Apply**

Please send a cover letter, resume, and references attached to a single email to [lrydzewski@plsma.org](mailto:lrydzewski@plsma.org) with the subject line "REICI Paralegal" as soon as possible. Interviews will take place on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate professional writing skills by drafting a letter at the time of the interview.

No phone calls or mail inquiries please.

***BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and formerly incarcerated persons are strongly encouraged to apply.***