Staff Attorney (entry level)

Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice has a newly created position open for an entry-level staff attorney.

Massachusetts Appleseed is committed to fostering the leadership and elevating the voices of people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, low-income people, immigrants, young people who were formerly involved in the child welfare system, young people who were formerly involved in the criminal justice system, people with disabilities, and people living in the many intersections of these experiences. We encourage people from these communities and people with experience outside traditional career paths to apply.

Massachusetts Appleseed is a non-profit organization driven by a mission to promote equal rights and opportunities for Massachusetts residents by developing and advocating for systemic solutions to social justice issues. We research and identify the ways in which the justice system, schools, and government agencies are systematically failing our most vulnerable residents, such as through uneven access to the courts and unfair application of school discipline policies. Leveraging pro bono support, we collaborate with community partners to identify solutions and advocate for their implementation with policymakers, lawmakers, and through coalition- and relationship-building. We take our work wherever we believe we can do the most good, whether that’s in the courthouse, at the State House, in schools, or in the community.

We focus on three primary policy areas:

- **Access to Justice:** Eliminating the many systemic barriers within Massachusetts’ legal systems and various administrative agencies that deny justice to thousands of residents each year, guaranteeing language access, and reforming the courts and administrative tribunals to make them more “user friendly” to people who cannot afford an attorney. We are particularly interested in how technology can be used to achieve these goals.

- **Educational Justice:** Protecting students’ rights, promoting racial equity, and advocating for policy change to keep all students in class where they are safe, supported, and available for learning, with a particular focus on the disparate impact of school discipline policies on students of color, also known as the “school-to-prison pipeline.”

- **Youth Homelessness:** Providing policy recommendations, easing systemic barriers, and developing legal resources to help youth experiencing homelessness build safe, stable futures.

The Staff Attorney will be responsible for researching, analyzing, and developing and implementing legal and policy solutions together with Massachusetts Appleseed’s core constituencies and will participate in community outreach, policy advocacy, legislative advocacy, and community meetings that are strategically aligned with the development of policy reform in each of the policy areas we focus on. The Staff Attorney may engage in advocacy at the municipal, state, and federal level as well as litigation in state, federal, and administrative tribunals.

The position works closely with the Executive Director, the Community Engagement Coordinator, as well as local community partners and leaders.

**Principal Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Ensure work is aligned to the goals and the strategic objectives of the organization.
- Conduct legal research, writing, and analysis.
- Draft legislation and legislative testimony.
- Participate in and lead legislative coalitions.
- Organize know-your-rights trainings and legal clinics.
• Identify, analyze, and help implement best-practice policy solutions.
• Work with community members and community and legal aid partners to identify issues, and potential systemic litigation and policy solutions to issues raised by the community.
• Work with the Executive Director and supervise Community Engagement Coordinator to research and develop solutions to systemic problems.
• Work with the Director of Development and Communications to create educational and advocacy materials (e.g., fact sheets, presentations, policy briefs, reports, know-your-rights guides) for key stakeholders.
• Supervise law students and other interns.
• Recruit and engage with pro bono partners.
• Collaborate with other Massachusetts Appleseed staff to support fundraising efforts, including preparing grant proposals/reports and developing and tracking project budgets/metrics.
• Participate, as needed, in administrative tasks and other activities to support the work of other Massachusetts Appleseed staff.

Qualifications:
The ideal candidate is a creative, self-motivated individual eager to be a part of our fast-paced team who possesses many of the following qualifications:

• J.D. required. Licensed to practice law in Massachusetts or taking necessary steps to be licensed.
• Excellent legal research and writing skills.
• Experience with legislative and administrative advocacy.
• Legal experience in litigation in the areas of administrative law and/or civil rights.
• Knowledge and awareness of issues relating to any of our three policy areas.
• Ability to work in a team-oriented, community-focused, and collaborative environment.
• A demonstrated commitment to social justice and ability to work across lines of difference, especially with racially and economically diverse communities.
• Spanish language fluency (speaking, reading, and writing) highly desired.
• An excellent sense of humor.

The salary range for this role is $55,000 – $65,000. Employee benefits include but are not limited to health insurance with employer contribution, generous paid time off (holidays, unlimited sick days, unlimited vacation time, Fridays off in July and August), and flexible scheduling. This is a full-time exempt position based out of Massachusetts Appleseed’s office in downtown Boston, but we expect a “hybrid” work environment, combining in-person days and work-at-home days, for the foreseeable future.

To center the safety and well-being of our communities, Massachusetts Appleseed requires vaccination against COVID-19 for all employees. Reasonable accommodation based on a qualifying medical exemption or sincerely held religious beliefs are being considered in accordance with applicable law.

To apply, please submit your resume, cover letter, and a writing sample to Deborah Silva, Executive Director, at deb@massappleseed.org. While applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled, we strongly encourage you to submit your application by June 3, 2022. If you need assistance or an accommodation due to a disability, please contact us at inquiry@massappleseed.org or at 617-482-8686.

Massachusetts Appleseed is an Equal Opportunity Employer, is committed to diversity in its workforce, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, military status or any other status protected by applicable law.