



Posted: December 20, 2019

Application Closing Date: January 31, 2020

## **DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES**

**Seattle, WA**

The **Washington Defender Association** (WDA) was created in 1983 in response to needs of public defenders and their clients. It is the only organization in Washington dedicated solely to public defense reform and to supporting and training public defense attorneys, investigators, social workers and other public defense staff. As a voice for the public defense community, WDA advances zealous and high quality legal representation and advocates for a fair and just legal system through collaboration with justice system stakeholders and the community. WDA envisions a world where well-resourced and supported public defenders work in partnership with their clients and their communities to achieve just results not only in individual cases, but by transforming the justice system to better serve our clients, their families and the community at large.

WDA focuses its work in three primary areas: training and publications, public defender case assistance, and policy advocacy. Our current work includes projects that provide training and resource assistance for: misdemeanor and felony defenders, especially those in rural and small offices without supervisory support; defenders representing noncitizen clients through our Immigration Project; and Incarcerated parents and their public defenders through our Incarcerated Parents Project. WDA's policy advocacy efforts primarily focus on the state level, but we also are involved in national and local issues. We work to protect the constitutional rights of our clients and promote equity throughout the justice system. This work includes combatting racial inequalities and other practices that adversely affect our low income clients and their communities.

***WDA is committed to creating a diverse, inclusive environment. We are proud to be an equal opportunity employer and encourage those of diverse backgrounds and marginalized communities to apply. We do not discriminate based upon race, religion, color, national origin, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, status as a protected veteran, status as an individual with a disability, or other applicable characteristics.***

## **JOB OVERVIEW**

WDA is seeking a Director of Legal Services who will be responsible for supervising and collaborating with WDA's small and mighty team of experienced resource attorneys. The legal director also works closely with other WDA staff, public defender member offices, individual members, volunteers and legal interns.

## **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Leadership and Policy Advocacy**

- Work collaboratively with program staff, assist in facilitation and oversee the implementation of the goals and priorities of WDA's Misdemeanor and Felony Technical Assistance Projects and the Incarcerated Parents Project.
- Partner with WDA's Immigration Project team to engage in professional development opportunities and to enhance and integrate advocacy strategies.
- Oversee WDA's Training/CLE program, including developing, implementing and maintaining systems to identify relevant training topics, organize programs, recruit presenters, evaluate programs, give and facilitate presentations. Work closely with WDA members, collaborating organizations, and WDA's legal team and operations staff.
- Oversee WDA's internal professional development and training activities.
- Ensure program goals and priorities are consistent with WDA's mission, vision and strategic goals.
- In collaboration with the Executive Director, identify and work on key issues and opportunities to further WDA legislative and policy goals, and provide leadership in developing and implementing strategies to achieve the goals.
- Direct and collaborate with WDA's legal team on policy reform through amicus work, rule-making and other activities.
- Direct and collaborate with staff on the recruitment, supervision and oversight of WDA's volunteer and legal intern program.
- Cultivate and maintain relevant professional networks and strategic organizational relationships within the justice community and related arenas to further WDA's mission, goals and priorities.

## **Supervision**

- Provide legal supervision and support to WDA project staff attorneys, legal volunteers and any other WDA staff designated by the Executive Director to report directly to the Director of Legal Services.
- Conduct regular meetings with direct reports and provide timely and appropriate support and feedback.
- Engage with direct reports to clearly and consistently communicate work performance expectations, provide feedback and complete regular work performance assessments.
- Develop professional development plans in collaboration with direct reports and conduct regular reviews regarding implementation.
- Maintain up-to-date legal knowledge in all relevant substantive areas.
- Engage in substantive legal work as necessary and appropriate, including responding to case consultation requests, editing and/or drafting of resource materials, and presenting at trainings.
- Provide the Executive Director with regular reports on program work plans, staff performance and professional development.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS**

- Experience in public defense practice and demonstrated commitment to improving public defense practices, policies, standards and client centered practices.
- A deep professional commitment to the mission and values of the organization.
- The ability to speak authentically and respectfully to all people and in particular communities and individuals impacted by the justice system.
- The ability to deeply listen, incorporate feedback, and build trust with staff and WDA members at all levels, regardless of positional authority.
- The ability to simultaneously manage a host of diverse projects and supervision responsibilities. Able to work independently and as part of a team.
- Able to engage collaboratively with internal and external colleagues to accomplish goals.
- Able to communicate work-related challenges and strategies to co-workers and collaborators.

- Demonstrated experience providing high-quality training, supervision and interpersonal mentorship.
- Strong legal advocacy and analytical skills. Strong preference for individuals with experience in criminal justice or public defense practice in Washington State or similar jurisdiction. Familiarity with Washington law and court systems.
- Strong and clear communication skills and oral presentation skills.
- Strong legal research skills, persuasive and clear writing skills for an audience that includes both legal professionals, impacted communities, policy makers and other stakeholders.
- An understanding of systemic oppression including institutional racism in our justice systems and economic injustice.
- Innovative problem solver with strategic thinking skills.
- Member in good standing of the Washington State Bar Association or eligible for reciprocity or willing to seek admission to the Washington State Bar Association at the soonest possible opportunity.
- Must have a working knowledge of Microsoft Office, PowerPoint and Westlaw. Is technology adept and able to do basic trouble shooting, use electronic and on-line tools for shared communication, collaboration, analysis and presentation.

**REPORTS TO:** Executive Director

### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

Benefits include full health insurance coverage, a matching retirement program, and access to healthcare and transportation federal savings accounts, as well as generous sick, vacation and leave policy.

WDA seeks to create a supportive, flexible and balanced working environment and community. We believe that this leads to greater work life balance, greater job satisfaction and a more productive and enjoyable workplace.

The annual salary range for the Director of Legal Services is \$100,000 – \$110,000 and commensurate with experience.

### **TO APPLY**

To apply, email Scott Shoemaker at [scott@defensenet.org](mailto:scott@defensenet.org) with a cover letter, resume and legal writing sample. If you have questions about the position, scope of work or other responsibilities, please contact our current Director of Legal Services, Hillary Behrman at [hillary@defensenet.org](mailto:hillary@defensenet.org).