

## Connecticut Legal Services Seeks Executive Director

Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) seeks an Executive Director to lead this civil legal aid organization as it begins its next chapter. The organization has a staff of 72 (including 50 attorneys), seven offices, and an annual budget of approximately \$14 million. This is an exciting opportunity for a strong leader with vision and creativity to build on CLS's proud 48-year history and to expand and strengthen access to justice, empower communities, and facilitate systemic change in Connecticut.

### Background

Connecticut Legal Services provides access to justice and protects critical civil legal rights of low-income individuals and families through representation, advice, collaboration, systemic advocacy and education. As the largest legal aid agency in Connecticut, CLS serves 58% of Connecticut's poverty population living in 122 communities, excluding the Greater Hartford and New Haven areas. CLS has a long history of providing critical legal services and acts as a community resource to resolve some of the most pressing challenges facing low-income Connecticut residents.

CLS provides legal services that are vitally important to its clients. CLS's legal work encompasses, among other things, family law, housing, public benefits, elder law, children's law, assistance to people with intellectual disabilities, immigration law, and employment law. In addition to providing individual legal representation and counseling for clients, CLS does broad impact work that benefits low-income individuals through advocacy, class action litigation, legal self-help materials, community outreach and education, and working with coalitions to pursue common goals. CLS has been a leader in the state in recognizing and addressing systemic problems affecting low-income residents.

To effectuate its work, CLS operates six full-service offices in Stamford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Britain, New London, Willimantic, and the administrative office in Middletown.

### Why Connecticut Legal Services?

CLS has an excellent reputation and strong network of partnerships and connections throughout the region with a track record of innovation and responsiveness to community needs.

The Executive Director will work with experienced CLS staff and management, a committed Board of Directors, and supportive community advocates, private lawyers, government agencies, and donors.

CLS provides a diverse range of vital services to more than 3,500 clients annually, as well as legislative and administrative policy advocacy, representation in class action litigation and other important services as described above. An estimated 200,000 people are eligible for legal services in CLS's footprint.

CLS has a diverse funding base. It does not receive funding from the Legal Services Corporation.

### Why Connecticut?

Connecticut boasts stunning New England scenery, excellent schools, and a perfect blend of urban and coastal living, all just a short trip from NYC and Boston.

The state is home to several Fortune 500 and major private companies against the backdrop of numerous charming small towns. This unique blend of economic strength and local character fosters a thriving environment for growth and opportunity. As Connecticut's economy grows, lower-income residents and a rising immigrant population face increasing challenges—creating unique opportunities for legal aid leadership to make a meaningful impact. Further, Connecticut also has a strong philanthropic community and a well-connected nonprofit sector that work collaboratively to support impactful, mission-driven efforts.

Among CLS's offices, Middletown is known for its walkable city center filled with diverse restaurants, local shops, and year-round arts and entertainment. Middletown is also home to Wesleyan University, bringing cultural richness, intellectual vitality, and a strong sense of community.

### **High Priority Roles and Responsibilities for the Next Executive Director**

- Maintain and expand the financial support necessary to carry out the organization's activities, including individual donor, corporate and foundation support;
- Serve as an effective ambassador for the organization, nurturing collaborative relationships with funders and grantors, elected officials, private bar and judicial leaders, private donors, and business and civic organizations throughout the service area;
- Support and foster a culture that promotes mutual respect and teamwork and an environment in which staff are valued, supported and committed to the mission and work;
- Maintain a collaborative relationship with other legal aid organizations and other antipoverty organizations in Connecticut;
- Provide leadership and nurture the values of CLS, including access to justice, a holistic view of client services, ease of access for new clients, prioritization of strategies that address the causes of legal problems and management of staff relations;
- Provide regular communications to staff and Board, facilitate Board operations and provide fiscal oversight to the organization; and
- Oversee updates to the strategic plan for CLS.

### **Desired Qualifications and Experience of the Successful Candidate**

- Exhibit excellent communication skills and the ability to build relationships with and to inspire the trust and confidence of CLS staff, Board members, client communities, donors, funders, and other stakeholders and allies, including the will and ability to engage in difficult conversations as circumstances may dictate;
- Have fundraising and/or grant writing knowledge and/or experience;
- Have the ability to think strategically and creatively;
- Possess demonstrated and exceptional leadership in managing and supervising a successful legal services organization, law firm, corporate law department, branch of a court system, relevant government agency or not-for-profit organization;
- Demonstrate knowledge of the laws and issues affecting low-income people and a passion for social, economic, and racial justice;
- Have experience in building a team environment, encouraging professional development of staff, and supporting staff in the program's work;

- Have experience working with organizations and individuals with a variety of perspectives, including clients, staff, Board members, the public, and elected and appointed officials;
- Possess personal attributes including professionalism, integrity, the ability to engender confidence and trust, honesty, a strong work ethic, a sense of humor, empathy, courage, a collaborative spirit, and an openness to diverse voices;
- Understand financial matters, including development of budgets, compliance with grant and contract requirements, Union negotiations, and financial oversight;
- Be skilled at managing and allocating limited resources appropriately;
- Be a licensed attorney, in good standing, with the expectation that the successful candidate will be admitted or able to be admitted to the Connecticut Bar in a reasonable period of time; and
- Have at least ten years of legal experience as a lawyer or as a manager in the non-profit sector, preferably in the public interest sector, and/or with previous legal aid experience.

**Location:** This is primarily an on-site position at the Middletown office. Periodic travel throughout the service area is required.

**Salary:** \$175,000 to \$205,000 D.O.E. Excellent Fringe Benefits.

### **Application Process**

Connecticut Legal Services is assisted in its search by: Dennis Groenenboom, Consultant.

**Materials should be submitted electronically to [dgroenenboom4@gmail.com](mailto:dgroenenboom4@gmail.com) in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Candidates with questions about the position or process are encouraged to contact Dennis at the email address above or at 515-537-4242.**

Screening of applicants begins immediately and will continue until the time of selection. To receive full consideration, you should submit your application materials by September 24, 2025. Please submit a letter expressing your interest in the position, your qualifications for the job, bar status, and what you believe you will be able to contribute to enhance the ability of CLS to provide high-quality, client focused services into the future. Please include a resume/CV and the names and contact information for three professional references.

*Connecticut Legal Services is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.*

**For further information about Connecticut Legal Services visit: <https://ctlegal.org>**