



PUBLIC JUSTICE
IMPACT. CHANGE.

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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Please post and inform potential applicants.

November 2022

DEBTORS' PRISON PROJECT ATTORNEY OAKLAND, CA / WASHINGTON, D.C. / REMOTE

Public Justice is a public interest legal advocacy organization that takes on the biggest systemic threats to justice of our time—abusive corporate power and predatory practices, the assault on civil rights and liberties, and the destruction of the earth's sustainability. We connect high impact litigation with strategic communications and the strength of our partnerships to fight these abusive and discriminatory systems and win social and economic justice.

Public Justice's Debtor's Prison Project (DPP) is a strategic litigation and advocacy project that combats the criminalization of poverty. Our work aims to counter the incentives for governments and private companies to shift the costs of the criminal legal system onto those least able to pay: indigent criminal defendants, their families, and their communities. We fight for the rights of individuals facing jail because they can't pay fines and fees and against the abusive imposition, enforcement, and collection of fines and fees. We seek to hire a staff attorney with civil rights litigation and advocacy experience who will be dedicated to fighting the criminalization of poverty.

The attorney can be expected to work on cases in any or all of DPP's focus areas, including:

- Class actions against for-profit companies and/or government agencies for constitutional violations related to jailing individuals who are unable to pay fines and fees;
- Challenges to the imposition of excessive fines and fees, including public defender fees, on criminal defendants on adults and juveniles—including both affirmative civil litigation and direct appeals on behalf of individual defendants;
- Consumer protection lawsuits against private debt collectors that collect criminal legal debt;
- Challenges to cash bail systems; and
- Advocacy on behalf of homeless individuals and communities who are subjected to unpayable fines and fees arising out of conduct related to the state of being homeless.

This position is a full-time exempt position and reports to the DPP Director. Our preference is for this attorney to be based in our West Coast Office (Oakland, CA), our national headquarters in Washington, D.C., but we will consider applications from especially qualified candidates seeking

to work remotely from other parts of the country. Because Public Justice handles litigation and advocacy nationally, the position will entail some travel. The attorney will work closely with the DPP team, as well as with other Public Justice attorneys and advocates at allied organizations, including public interest lawyers at other organizations, lawyers at private firms, public defenders, legal services lawyers, community activists, investigators, and organizers.

Job Responsibilities:

- Serve as lead counsel or co-counsel in the investigation and development of impact litigation, amicus briefs, and special legal projects that further the strategic goals of DPP and the mission of Public Justice;
- Participate in the full range of litigation tasks involved in challenging criminal fines and fees, including factual investigation, identifying clients, conducting legal research and analysis, briefing, oral arguments, client communications, and settlement negotiations;
- Manage and respond to intakes and inquiries involving the work of DPP;
- Develop and engage in a broad range of legal advocacy through and outside the courts (including drafting letters to local governments, courts, and agencies; participating in meetings and events; and coordinating with allied organizations) regarding DPP's advocacy priorities;
- Draft blog posts, engage social media, and participate with Public Justice's communications team in developing and implementing media plans to educate lawmakers, lawyers, grassroots supporters, reporters, and the public about our clients and about fines and fees in the criminal legal system that perpetuate cycles of poverty;
- Build networks and collaborate with allies to advance the mission of DPP;
- Participate in strategic planning and other planning initiatives for DPP.

Qualifications:

- Law school graduate with at least 2 to 3 years of relevant legal and advocacy experience (clerkships will count toward that experience);
- Admission to a State Bar;
- Preference given to applicants with at least three years of experience, ideally in either affirmative civil rights class actions, public defense, or other fines and fees litigation;
- Strong commitment to racial justice, demarcation, and ending wealth-based discrimination;
- Excellent analytical, legal research, and writing skills;
- Excellent communication and public speaking skills;
- Self-motivation and proven ability to work as part of a team;
- Strong work ethic, initiative, and sound, yet creative judgment;
- Willingness to travel;
- Sensitivity to the needs and concerns of and the ability to work with individuals and groups from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and orientations; and
- Ability and willingness to contribute to the creation of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work community that encourages collaboration.

We offer a mission-focused work environment, a teamwork and community-oriented approach, and a competitive compensation package. We recognize and support healthy work-life balance policies, including operating on a four-day work week all-year round. We also offer a generous benefits package, including at least three weeks of paid vacation, two weeks of sick leave, and two personal days each year, all federal and some local holidays, employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance premiums, and a 401(k) plan. Our attorneys are paid on a salary scale based

on years out of law school. The annual salary will be set by a pay scale and likely start at \$76,000 but will depend on experience. Public Justice requires those working in its offices to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Reasonable accommodations to this requirement, including remote work, based on disability or a sincerely held religious belief will be considered.

To apply, interested candidates should submit the following materials:

- Cover letter that conveys why you are drawn to DPP's mission and how your particular experience makes you a strong candidate for this position;
- Resume;
- Law school transcript (official or unofficial);
- Contact information for three references; and
- Writing sample, preferably a legal brief or memorandum that is either unedited or only lightly edited by someone other than you; please include a cover sheet explaining the extent of editing by someone else.

Your application should consist of two electronic files: (1) your cover letter, resume, transcript, and references in a single .pdf file; and (2) a writing sample in another .pdf file. The application deadline is December 19, 2022, at which point applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. We are seeking applicants who can ideally start in the first quarter of 2023.

Please submit both files to bhardingham@publicjustice.net. For more information, please visit our website at www.publicjustice.net.

Public Justice is an equal opportunity employer and values a diverse workplace. We strongly encourage applications from people with disabilities; people of color, including bilingual and bicultural individuals; LGBTQ+ individuals; people of all genders; veterans; previously incarcerated individuals; and people of all ages. Public Justice is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. If you require reasonable accommodations during any part of the hiring process, please email lhughes@publicjustice.net.