

FULL-TIME BRUTALITY PROJECT PARALEGAL

General Position Description

Prisoners Legal Services (PLS) is seeking an outstanding full-time paralegal to concentrate on working to combat staff-on-prisoner assault in Massachusetts jails and prisons. PLS has two intersecting projects that focus on this problem, the Prison Brutality Project and Rapid Response to Brutality Project. This paralegal will work through those projects to deter staff-on-prisoner assaults, to advocate for impacted prisoners, and to support PLS's efforts to provide legal services to these prisoners and increase community awareness of this problem. The paralegal will meet with injured prisoners, usually within 72 hours of report, to interview and photograph them, collect documents and give legal advice about the client's rights. After the visit, the paralegal will conduct follow-up advocacy, primarily regarding preservation of evidence and any unmet medical needs from the assault. In those cases that meet the criteria to be considered for litigation the paralegal will also investigate the prisoners' claims by gathering records generated by the prison or jail in relation to the incident, as well as conducting witness interviews. The paralegal and other PLS staff will evaluate completed investigations to determine whether there is sufficient proof to merit litigation. Meritorious cases are litigated, when resources allow, by PLS attorneys or, if possible, the cases are referred to private attorneys.

Responsibilities

This position is full-time and supervised by a senior paralegal and an attorney.

Responsibilities for this position may include:

- Take telephone calls and read mail reporting staff assaults on prisoners,
- Review and evaluate reported incidents to determine if they warrant investigation;
- Meet with and interview prisoner clients who have been assaulted by staff at state prisons and county jails in Massachusetts, including photographing their injuries;
- Investigate new and ongoing staff assault intakes, tracking all investigations and ensuring they are completed in as timely a manner as possible;
- Advocate for prisoners in new and ongoing guard assault cases;
- Visit and interview prisoner witnesses to assaults at prisons or jails;
- Counsel and advise clients about their legal rights relating to the assault and keep clients apprised about developments in their case;
- Create and maintain client files and keep databases updated for all staff assault cases;
- Track all brutality litigation within the PLS office and referred out to private counsel;
- Assist in planning regular brutality meetings, prepare and present summaries of investigated cases at brutality meetings for litigation consideration, take minutes, and complete all necessary follow up as assigned;
- Conduct legal research, work on brutality focused projects, assist in brutality litigation/casework, and assist in brutality case referrals, as assigned;
- Assist in supervising student interns and volunteers on brutality work;
- Assist in improving systems and standard operating procedures;
- Participate in monthly PLS staff meetings and regular supervision meetings
- Work cooperatively with prisoner clients, PLS brutality team members, and private counsel
- Compile statistics for brutality grant writing and reporting

- All other tasks as assigned by the Executive Director or supervisors

Other Qualifications

- Must be comfortable having frequent contact with prisoner clients through visits, telephone and letter and advocating for their needs. (Spanish speakers are *strongly* encouraged to apply).
- Organizational and administrative skills are required.
- Travel to Massachusetts prisons and jails is required. Applicants must have a valid driver's license and regular access to a car.
- Ability to work cooperatively with a team is required.
- Ability to speak and write in Spanish strongly preferred.
- Bi-cultural, bilingual candidates and people of color are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Experience working with and advocating for marginalized populations preferred.
- Attention to detail required.
- Applicants will be asked to demonstrate professional writing skills by drafting a letter at the time of the interview.

Benefits and Salary

PLS offers a very competitive salary within the legal services field and commensurate with experience. PLS provides a comprehensive benefits package, including family medical and dental coverage. Flex time or other alternative arrangements considered. PLS is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should send a resume, cover letter and three professional references to Al Troisi at atroisi@plsma.org. No phone calls or mail inquiries please.

People of color, LGBTQI individuals, formerly incarcerated and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.