



## **Consumer Law Staff Attorney Rochester NY (Full-Time)**

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® (LawNY) has an immediate opening for a Staff Attorney within our Consumer Unit. This position is program wide and will collaborate with all of the LawNY offices. This position can be housed in any one of our seven offices located in Rochester, Geneva, Ithaca, Bath, Elmira, Olean, or Jamestown, based on the selected candidate's preference. Moreover, LawNY offers a hybrid work schedule of up to three remote days per week during an employee's first six months, and up to fully remote thereafter, consistent with job responsibilities. This position will require periodic in-person appearances and some travel across the organization's service area.

### **Position Description**

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® (LawNY®) is a not-for-profit law firm providing free legal services to eligible clients in civil cases through seven field offices covering a fourteen county area in Western New York. Our Consumer Law Unit was created in 2017 to increase LawNY's capacity to represent clients with consumer law problems across our 14-county service area. Our consumer unit currently focuses on consumer credit debt defense, auto fraud, student loans, medical/nursing home debt, affirmative consumer litigation, bankruptcy, and more. The consumer unit is currently composed of a team of seven staff members, including one supervising attorney, one staff attorney, two staff paralegals, two AmeriCorps legal assistants, and a rotating group of law student volunteers and interns, along with this Staff Attorney position.

This attorney will focus on a wide variety of consumer protection issues, including predatory debt collection, credit reporting disputes, bankruptcy, and deceptive consumer practices. The ideal candidate should have a strong understanding of the intersection of consumer issues with racial justice, and a willingness to incorporate racial justice principles into both the day-to-day legal work of the unit as well as overarching unit priorities and strategies. The applicant must also have the caring, patience, and emotional maturity to help low-income people navigate crisis situations.

This position will report to the Supervising Attorney of the Consumer Unit.

**Responsibilities** These are the most significant responsibilities and primary functions of the position.

- Staff LawNY®'s regional Consumer Hotline, providing information and resources to callers with consumer problems;
- Conduct initial client screenings and triage incoming consumer cases, including obtaining documentation and determining eligibility for services;
- Maintain a caseload of consumer law cases including advice, negotiation, litigation and administrative advocacy in accordance with LawNY program priorities and case handling policies;
- Assist staff on presentations and outreach to the community;
- Actively engages organizations led by impacted communities, community organizations, agencies and bar associations in developing and setting advocacy and litigation priorities and strategies to address systemic consumer problems that adversely impact the low-income communities we serve.

- Collaborates with other human services providers, non-profit organizations and community groups as well as the courts, administrative tribunals and the private bar to spot common legal issues and patterns and discuss strategies for targeting systemic issues.
- Identify emerging trends in consumer law practice at the State and Federal level, by participating in relevant workgroups and conferences;
- Maintains thorough and timely case and file management and ensures compliance under the program rules specified by the Legal Services Corporation, other funders, and LawNY's internal policies.
- Maintains a high level of professional competence through attendance at training sessions, seminars and conferences and individual efforts to keep abreast of current developments in the area of poverty law, the application of a race equity lens to client service, as well as issues in the community affecting low-income people.
- Collaborates with colleagues, managers, and directors to develop, implement, and maintain a diverse, equitable and inclusive work environment.
- Provides input as needed to administrator(s) on fundraising and grant reporting.

**Qualifications** *These are the basic qualifications for the position.*

- Admitted to practice and in good standing in New York State, eligible for admission without examination, or willing to take the next available Bar examination.
- Demonstrated commitment of service to low-income people.

**Additional Traits and Skills** *These are the traits, attributes, attitudes, and skills that speak to the candidate's ability to succeed in the position. **While no one candidate will possess all of the qualities listed, the ideal candidate will have many of these qualities.** LawNY encourages each candidate to think about their own personal knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as professional skills and experience, in relation to this list of traits and skills.*

- Previous experience involving one or more areas of poverty, and especially consumer law.
- Litigation experience, including experience with motion practice, discovery, and conducting trials, preferably in the area of consumer law and economic justice.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and undertake initiatives.
- Demonstrated ability to command the trust and respect of staff members, community groups and the legal community.
- Experience related to serving individuals from marginalized groups.
- An understanding of the concepts of institutional and structural racism and their impact on underserved and underrepresented communities
- Incorporates an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens into legal practice.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, including a commitment to providing trauma-informed services.
- Humility in working with colleagues and clients across the spectrum of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, immigrant status, religious identity, physical and mental disabilities and/or limited English proficiency.
- Ability to work under deadlines and manage multiple tasks.
- True fluency in Spanish or another language other than English that is spoken by our clients is a plus.

## Salary and Benefits

Salary is competitive and is set on a standardized organizational salary scale based on years of job experience. The annual salary for a Staff Attorney with zero years of legal experience is \$58,000.

We provide a superlative package of fringe benefits including:

- 94% employer paid health insurance, with significant HSA contributions to offset high deduction plans
- 100% employer paid dental and disability insurance
- \$50,000 automatic life insurance
- Remote Work Policy: New staff are able to work from home up to 3 days per week during their 6 month probationary period with manager approval. This increases to 5 days per week once successfully finished with a probationary period with manager approval.
- LawNY is committed to providing a work-life balance to their employees. We encourage and support a 35 hour work week to ensure our employees have this balance.

We also provide a very generous leave package including, in the first year of employment, 20 days of vacation plus 13.5 holidays and two floating holidays. Employees also receive 12 sick days and five personal days per year. New parents receive 20 days of paid new parent leave.

LawNY participates in the Legal Services Corporation loan repayment assistance program and is also a qualifying public service loan forgiveness (PSLF) employer.

## Start Date & Application Timeframe

**Applications for this position will close February 5, 2024.** Please apply before then for full consideration. You will receive a confirmation email when your application has been received on our HR platform. LawNY® will contact you to inform you whether you have been offered an interview.

This position starts as soon as possible after offers are made, with a target start date of April 2024. The job will remain posted until filled. If not filled by this date, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

## Application Instructions

To apply, submit your cover letter and resume through LawNY®'s **BambooHR platform, [here](#)**. To promote social justice and achieve our mission, LawNY® is committed to maintaining a diverse staff and creating an inclusive and respectful workplace. **In your cover letter, please explain how you think your lived and/or professional experience or background has prepared you to contribute to support a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion in LawNY's work.**

Questions or Accommodations? Contact Sandra Coyne at [scoyne@lawny.org](mailto:scoyne@lawny.org)

*Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. (LawNY) is an equal opportunity employer, committed to inclusive hiring and dedicated to diversity in our work and staff. LawNY® strongly encourages applications from Black, Indigenous and People of Color, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and persons from other underrepresented groups whose background may contribute to working in and sustaining an environment that enables staff and clients to feel empowered, valued, respected, and safe. LawNY welcomes applications regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or any other consideration protected by law.*