



**Staff Attorney, Disability Advocacy Program
Rochester, NY**

Employment Status: Full-Time

FLSA Status: Exempt

Practice Group: Disability Advocacy Program (DAP)

I. Organization Information

Empire Justice Center, a diverse and highly respected statewide legal services organization, seeks a Staff Attorney for our Disability Advocacy Program. This is an opportunity to join and grow in one of the most influential organizations serving marginalized low-income individuals and families in New York State.

Empire Justice Center attracts and employs a diverse team of dedicated, determined, and passionate advocates who significantly impact the lives of low-income New Yorkers. We succeed through direct legal representation high-impact litigation, and legislative and administrative advocacy. Additionally, the organization provides top-notch training and technical assistance to other advocates to ensure fairness and justice for New Yorkers. The organization thrives on our commitment to supporting justice for populations historically and currently experiencing high levels of oppression. These populations include racially diverse individuals and families experiencing poverty, housing insecurity, immigration issues, and domestic violence. Additionally, the organization advocates for people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, and school-age children facing discrimination and violations of their civil rights in schools.

With offices in Rochester, Albany, Westchester County, and Long Island, our organization offers staff an exciting and dynamic inclusive working environment with a strong commitment to work/life balance, teamwork, diversity, wellness, and personal/professional development.

II. Position Summary

The Disability Advocacy Program (DAP) Staff Attorney provides direct representation to low-income individuals with disabilities in Monroe County whose claims for federal disability benefits (SSI and SSD) have been denied or whose federal disability benefits are being terminated. The DAP attorney represents clients at administrative hearings and appeals before the Social Security Administration.

III. Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Developing an in-depth knowledge of Social Security disability law, policy, and procedures;
- Screening potential clients, conducting intakes, and, in coordination with other staff, reviewing new matters for case acceptance;
- Representing claimants at administrative hearings and appeals before the Social Security Administration;
- Interviewing clients and providing legal advice about the Social Security appeals process;
- Maintaining professional, compassionate, and effective relationships with clients;
- Analyzing legal issues through review of documents, client meetings, and legal research;
- Developing medical and other evidence
- Advocating for clients before the Social Security Administration and other agencies involved in the disability appeals process;
- Engaging in hearing advocacy through oral argument, direct and cross-examination, and introduction of evidence;
- Preparing written memoranda;
- Preparing outreach materials and participating in community outreach;
- Attending and participating in continuing legal education events relevant to Social Security disability appeals;
- Keeping accurate case and time records in the case management system.
- Participate in federal district court litigation, as needed;
- *Please note that if the need arises, all positions will supervise other members of the practice group.*
- *Other duties as assigned by your supervisor and/or to meet the organization's needs. Please note that because Empire Justice Center is a nonprofit legal services organization, our resources are limited, all staff are expected to perform administrative and other support-related duties as needed to serve our clients and fulfill our mission.*

IV. Minimum Qualifications (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities)

- Juris Doctorate Degree from an accredited US law school or international equivalent
- Admission to the New York State Bar and in good standing as a member of the bar
- At least 1-2 years of professional experience
- Ability to Work on a Team
- Communication Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Document Drafting
- Client Experience
- Legal Advocacy
- Microsoft Office
- Legal Research

V. Salary

Salary is dependent on years of experience and based on the organizational pay scale. The beginning salary for this position, with at least one year of experience, is \$54,580, and the salary for this position, with two years of experience, is \$56,580.

VI. Benefits

We are an organization that supports and encourages a work/life balance. Empire Justice Center offers a generous benefit package including:

- Health insurance (employer pays 100% premium for a high quality, co-pay insurance plan).
- 403(b) eligibility with 1% employer match and additional employer contribution.
- 3% Non-Elective Annual Contribution made by Empire Justice Center.
 - Benefit eligible after 12 months of employment.
- Generous vacation, sick, personal, and holiday time
 - 14 Paid Holidays
 - Vacation PTO: 10.5 Hours/Month; Sick PTO: 7 Hours/Month; Personal PTO: 5 Days/Year
- Bilingual salary enhancement for qualifying employees.
- Loan Repayment Assistance Program.
- Voluntary Supplemental Disability.
- Dental Insurance (employee paid).
- Vision Insurance (employee paid).
- \$150K Group Term Life Insurance.
- Generous Bereavement Leave.
- 35-hour full-time work week.
- NYS Short-Term Disability.
- FSA Eligibility.

Empire Justice Center is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and strongly desires a diverse and inclusive workforce. Empire Justice Center provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants. It prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type, specifically - race, color, religion, age (40 or older), sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, disability status, genetics, neurodiversity, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

TO APPLY: Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. If interested, e-mail a resume, writing sample, and contact information for three professional references aware of this application to employment@empirejustice.org. Please include "**Staff Attorney, DAP**, First/Last Name" in the subject line of the email. No phone calls or hard copies, please.

If reasonable accommodations are needed, please contact Mercedece Love, Human Resources and Compliance Coordinator at mlove@empirejustice.org. Empire Justice Center is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals. As part of this commitment, Empire Justice Center ensures that persons with disabilities and/or communication barriers are provided with reasonable accommodations.