

## Center for Social Justice: Staff Attorney

The Center for Social Justice at Western New England University seeks a highly motivated, full-time Staff Attorney to oversee the Center's client-facing programs, including the Consumer Debt Initiative (CDI), and to assist the Center in fulfilling its mission of advancing social justice through research, advocacy, education, innovation, and public engagement. The Center for Social Justice is designed to strengthen collaborative efforts between the School of Law and the region to work toward a more just, equitable, and inclusive society in its next century of service. Learn more on our website at: [https://bit.ly/WNE\\_CSJ](https://bit.ly/WNE_CSJ).

The CDI is an exciting project at the Center. It serves self-represented litigants defending credit card collection actions filed by debt buyers in the Springfield District Court Small Claims session. Volunteer students, lawyers and non-lawyers provide counsel and advice, negotiate with opposing counsel, draft settlement agreements, and may appear on behalf of consumers for hearings and trials. Clients may also be connected with financial literacy education materials and local resources addressing consumer debt. Court hearings are currently being held weekly, with multiple sessions per week.

Responsibilities: The Staff Attorney should have (or be able to quickly develop) and maintain expertise in the areas of consumer debt and general civil litigation. The Staff Attorney will oversee, coordinate, and execute the Center's client-facing initiatives each week, in consultation with the Center Director. This may include case work, recruitment and supervision of volunteers, conducting and coordinating trainings, developing materials, and collecting, maintaining, and entering data into a client management system, as well as contributing to annual and funding reporting requirements. This role will also work to develop upstream initiatives and relationships with community partners.

### Qualifications:

- A J.D. from an accredited law school, and a license to practice law in Massachusetts (the ability to obtain a license promptly will also be considered).
- Litigation experience in consumer, housing, civil rights or other public interest law preferred, but not required.
- Strong commitment to social justice and public interest law.
- Superior advocacy and negotiation skills.
- Well-organized with excellent attention to detail.
- Training and/or public speaking experience preferred, but not required.
- Reliable transportation and the ability to travel in state (as needed, post-COVID).
- Computer literacy.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team in a small nonprofit/academic environment.
- Ability to work well with individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Experience working with low income populations preferred.
- Bilingual English/Spanish a plus.
- Experience with social media, Excel and client management systems (e.g. Salesforce, Clio) a plus.

Pay: This is a grant-funded position which has secured funding for two years plus benefits. The current grant cycle ends October 31, 2022 and a renewal grant application for funding will be submitted in Summer 2022.

Application Process: Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Applications should include a letter indicating why you are interested in this work and what experience you possess that qualifies you for this contract. A current resume with references is also required. To apply to this position please visit <http://employment.wne.edu>.

The Center is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, free from discrimination. We encourage individuals from historically marginalized communities to apply and welcome candidates whose background may contribute to the further diversification of our community.

Questions may be directed to the Center Director, Ariel Clemmer, at 413-796-2103 or [ariel.clemmer@law.wne.edu](mailto:ariel.clemmer@law.wne.edu).

Excellent fringe benefits including tuition remission for employee, spouse, and dependent children.

Western New England University is a private, independent, coeducational institution founded in 1919. Located on an attractive 215-acre suburban campus in Springfield, Massachusetts, Western New England University serves 3,900 students, including more than 2,600 full-time undergraduate students. Undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs are offered through Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering, and Pharmacy, and School of Law.

*In alignment with the University's commitment to health and safety, all Faculty and Staff are required to be vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination.*