

Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

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Lend A Lawyer for MLRI's Collateral Consequences of Criminal Record Project

Goal: To provide legal assistance and representation to people excluded from employment, housing, job training, licensing or other opportunities due to a criminal history.

Background: Close to three million individual criminal records are maintained by the State's criminal history repository. Thousands of low-income people processed through the criminal system, whether or not they were convicted, are excluded from or experience substantial hardship obtaining a job, housing, skills training, internship, licensing or education.

MLRI's criminal offender record information (CORI) project pursues policy advocacy at the administrative and state levels, engages in litigation, where necessary, provides legal representation to seal or correct records, trains social service organizations and others to build their capacity, and collaborates with grassroots community groups to advance systemic reforms of the CORI system.

Responsibilities: A full-time lawyer could assist the CORI Project in the following ways:

- 1) Conduct intake at several career centers and respond to phone and email inquiries to MLRI;
- 2) Provide legal representation, where appropriate, to seal or correct records;
- 3) Work with MLRI CORI Project staff (Fran Fajana) to identify systemic trends and devise strategies to remedy them;
- 4) Work with Fran to provide technical support to advance the CORI Project's 2009 legislative agenda, including participating as legal counsel to Commonwealth CORI Coalition;
- 5) Work with Fran to investigate, document and redress, as appropriate, the practices of private background checking organizations;
- 6) Work with Fran to identify and pursue a disparate impact case;
- 7) Work with Fran to push administrative changes at the MCAD;
- 8) Work with Fran to monitor implementation of the Boston City Fair CORI Practices ordinance; and
- 9) Conduct 4 CORI trainings for social service organizations.

