

HEALTH JUSTICE ADVOCATE:

Statewide Health Access for Criminal Justice-Involved Individuals Project

The Opportunity: The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) seeks a dynamic, creative, and experienced advocate to develop and advance a statewide project to overcome access barriers to Medicaid and other public benefits and to address health-related needs for individuals returning to the community after incarceration. MLRI was one of 24 organizations awarded a 5-year grant from the [Massachusetts Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds](#) (MCHHA) to address the root causes of health inequities; disrupt and remove barriers to health; and advance racial and health equity by tackling institutional and structural racism. MLRI's project focuses on criminal justice-involved (CJI) individuals and will initially focus on eligibility and access to health care through MassHealth; over the course of the project, we will also identify (through outreach and partnerships with member-led CJI-focused community organizations) and address barriers to other benefits programs. (Although this is funded through a 5-year MCHHA grant, MLRI hopes to make this a sustainable, long-term initiative through other funding opportunities.)

About MLRI: Founded in 1968, MLRI is a nonprofit poverty law and policy center that provides statewide advocacy and leadership to advance economic, racial, and social justice for low-income people and communities. We pursue systems change through litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, coalition building, community lawyering, and other strategies to address laws, policies and practices that impact low-income people and historically marginalized populations. MLRI's advocacy incorporates a racial equity lens and a community-driven framework that values the voices and experiences of people with lived experience of poverty, economic and racial injustice. MLRI is also the statewide multi-issue poverty law support center in the Massachusetts civil legal aid delivery system; our advocates provide substantive expertise and technical assistance to frontline legal aid field programs and many other providers that serve low-income people and communities in Massachusetts.

Core Responsibilities:

- **Advocacy:** Work collaboratively with the MA Department of Public Health, Health Resources in Action, Inc. (HRiA), Executive Office of Elder Affairs, regional legal aid programs, community-based organizations and people with lived experience to identify and execute legislative, administrative and other solutions that address systemic barriers to public benefits access and healthy outcomes for criminal justice-involved ("CJI") individuals upon release from the custody of the Department of Corrections and the County Houses of Correction. This includes, e.g., developing and leading legislative and administrative advocacy campaigns, writing regulatory comments, reports, policy briefs.
- **Community Outreach & Coalition-building:** Conduct outreach and work collaboratively with community organizations and people with lived experience to advance reforms that remove

barriers to health care and other services and supports to enhance the health of previously incarcerated individuals.

- **Statewide Capacity-Building, Technical Assistance & Training:** Build statewide capacity within MLRI, and with regional legal aid programs and community organizations to identify and address barriers preventing those involved with the criminal justice system from obtaining access to health care and other critical benefits. This includes, e.g., providing trainings and informational sessions, developing advocacy manuals, educational materials and practical information for clients, advocates, policymakers, media, community partners, and other key stakeholders; drafting & reviewing relevant content for clients (MassLegalHelp.org) and advocates (MassLegalServices.org) through the MA Legal Aid Websites Project.
- **Collect Relevant Data, Attend Meetings & Prepare Project Reports:** Work collaboratively with the MA Department of Public Health, Health Resources in Action, Inc. (HRiA) and other project partners to develop a methodology to collect data and develop measurements of success as required by the funders. Recognize trends and develop recommendations based on data analysis. Attend MCHAA grantee and other stakeholder meetings, share learnings, and prepare project reports and other materials as required by the funder.

Qualifications – a successful candidate will possess the following:

- A minimum of 3-5 years of relevant experience, including policy advocacy experience with state and/or federal administrative agencies and legislative bodies
- Public health, health care/Medicaid policy, mental health, substance use, criminal justice, or other relevant experience
- Demonstrated experience building and working effectively with community-based groups and diverse, broad-based coalitions
- Background or experience in racial justice advocacy, civil rights or anti-poverty advocacy; understanding the principles of race equity analysis and the intersection of racism and poverty
- Ability to develop, implement and lead statewide initiatives through effective project management and organizational skills and flexibility; ability to engage, inspire, influence and collaborate with partners and bring together cross-functional teams to achieve goals
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively and persuasively orally and in writing
- Commitment to MLRI’s mission to serve low-income, historically and presently marginalized, and vulnerable populations by advancing a race equity agenda through a community driven advocacy lens

Salary and Benefits:

- MLRI's salary scales are based on years of relevant experience. For example, current annual salary at 5 years of experience for an attorney is \$70,000; 7 years of experience is \$73,000; 10 years is \$77,750; 15 years is \$84,500. Current non-attorney advocate salary at 5 years experience is \$61,854; 7 years of experience is \$62,854; 10 years is 65,014; 15 years is \$71,099. (Please note: MLRI is updating its salaries effective January 1, 2023.)
- MLRI provides a very generous benefits package including health, dental, vision, life and disability insurance, 403(b) plan (which includes a 2% employer contribution after a vesting period of 6 months), as well as vacation, holiday, and family leave. MLRI will be adopting a hybrid in-office/remote work schedule (3 days in office/2 days remote).

How to Apply:

Please email a cover letter outlining experience and qualifications and a resume to **humanresources@mlri.org**, with "**Health Justice Advocate**" in the subject line. No phone calls please.

Deadline for Submission:

Application materials will be reviewed and interviews will be scheduled on a rolling basis; interested and qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to submit application materials promptly.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

MLRI is an equal opportunity employer. We believe that having an inclusive culture and a staff, board, and volunteers with diverse personal and professional backgrounds and lived experience enhances our ability to meet our mission and creates an environment where all members of our community can thrive. We strongly encourage applications from people of color, women, immigrants, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ community, people with lived experience of poverty, and people historically and presently excluded and marginalized.