

## ***Legal Aid of Western Missouri Seeks an Executive Director***

Legal Aid of Western Missouri—LAWMO—is seeking an Executive Director to lead its nationally regarded legal assistance program serving low-income residents of the Western Missouri region, headquartered in Kansas City.

### ***The Position***

Legal Aid of Western Missouri seeks an experienced leader who is passionate about LAWMO's mission to provide the highest quality legal services to individuals, families and groups faced with economic barriers in obtaining civil legal representation. The Executive Director will work with a diverse and dedicated Board of Directors, strong management team, and exceptional staff. The current Executive Director is retiring after over thirty years of excellent service to LAWMO and the community. The next Executive Director will have the opportunity to build on the vision and quality work of this fiscally-strong, high-performance program.

### ***Responsibilities for the new Executive Director include—***

- Continuing LAWMO's leadership in proving high quality advocacy for low-income and elderly clients and organizations to gain equal access to justice, through litigation, special projects, collaborative partnerships with other organizations, and close connections to residents throughout the service area.
- Developing a clear strategic vision and priorities for LAWMO for the next two to five years.
- Supporting and engaging LAWMO's Board of Directors.
- Maintaining the fiscal and operational strength of LAWMO by meeting Legal Services Corporation compliance regulations and other funder requirements.
- Recruiting diverse and highly competent staff.
- Supervising and motivating staff.
- Serving as the public voice of LAWMO in the client community, in state and local bar associations, among local civic and legal community leaders, and to the general public.
- Undertaking expanded fundraising efforts with LAWMO's philanthropic partners, supporting governmental entities, and private law firms.
- Improving the effective use of technology for client services.

***The successful Executive Director candidate will—***

- Be passionate about the mission of LAWMO and have a demonstrated commitment to providing legal services to low-income persons.
- Understand the unique challenges of a large urban and rural legal aid program.
- Be a successful leader and manager inside an organization and in the community, preferably with a legal aid program.
- Be successful and enthusiastic about fundraising.
- Have experience managing the fiscal operations of a multi-million dollar organization.
- Have worked productively with a Board of Directors.
- Value and have successful experience with a diverse staff and client community.
- Understand the effective use of technology for client services.
- Have practiced law.
- Possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

***Applications***

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. In order to receive full consideration, candidates are urged to apply before *February 25, 2008*. Interested candidates should submit a letter expressing in detail why they are interested in the Executive Director position at LAWMO as well as what they believe they can contribute to LAWMO's future and its client community. The letter should be accompanied by a current resume, writing sample, and contact information for three references. All application materials should be submitted via email to Mary Beth Denzer at LAWMO, [mdenzer@lawmo.org](mailto:mdenzer@lawmo.org). Candidates with questions about the position or process are encouraged to contact Ms. Denzer at 816-474-6750. Salary is negotiable and depends upon experience. LAWMO is an equal opportunity employer.

***The LAWMO Program — Background***

Legal Aid of Western Missouri has provided essential civil legal services to low-income people of western Missouri since 1964. LAWMO's mission is to improve the lives of those in need through quality legal assistance. Priority is given to cases involving housing, employment, domestic abuse, immigration, consumer problems and public

benefits. In 2006, LAWMO provided over 20,300 impoverished people with equal access to justice that might otherwise have been denied because of their economic status. LAWMO often represents the last hope for those living below the poverty level with nowhere else to turn.

With offices in downtown Kansas City, Joplin, St. Joseph, Warrensburg, a neighborhood office in Kansas City's Westside and an evening legal clinic in Carthage, LAWMO serves a 40-county area of western Missouri.

LAWMO is a long-time recipient of Federal Legal Services Corporation financial support, which constitutes about one-quarter of overall revenue. Other revenue sources include United Way, numerous local and national foundations, local, state, county and municipal grants, HUD, and a major development campaign supported by local private law firms, entities and individuals. LAWMO's annual budget is approximately \$7.2 million.

LAWMO is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one-third eligible clients and about two-thirds attorneys, all of whom are committed to LAWMO's mission.

LAWMO currently staffs 50 attorneys and 30 paralegals. In 2006, LAWMO closed 12,819 cases to immediately benefit 20,326 persons.

LAWMO has several innovative special projects to cultivate expertise and handle complex matters of special need. A sampling of these projects —

- *Immigration Assistance Project.* Helps individuals and their families with immigration problems. These include gaining legal status, naturalization, temporary and permanent resident status and US citizenship. In addition, the Project provides counsel for those facing deportation, bond hearings and seeking work permits. The Project also provides advice, referral and legal assistance for battered immigrants; and educates diverse communities of advocates about the legal remedies and benefits available to eligible battered immigrants and how to properly seek them.
- *Economic Development Unit.* Specializes in representing client organizations pursuing local neighborhood issues, such as housing revitalization, discriminatory lending, housing abandonment and municipal services.
- *AIDS Legal Assistance Project.* Assists people who have been denied access to housing or who have been threatened with eviction because they have HIV/AIDS; those terminated from jobs because of their illness or their association with a high-risk group; and those who have been denied insurance coverage because of claims, among others, that the HIV/AIDS diagnosis was a pre-existing condition. These clients are also assisted with preparing wills, durable powers of attorney and permanency planning for their children.

- *Predatory Lending Project.* A two-year grant from the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and the National Consumer Law Center provided partial funding for LAWMO's predatory lending project in 2006. A LAWMO attorney represents seniors and low-income families in Kansas City's urban core who are at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure as a result of predatory loans.
- *Medicaid Appeals Project.* Helps obtain Medicaid benefits for Truman Hospital patients. It is an innovative, self-funded partnership with the hospital and the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City. The project allows many Truman patients with serious health problems to have access to preventive care, which will improve their quality of life and reduce the number of avoidable emergency room visits at Truman.
- *MC+ Advocacy Project.* An ombudsman service providing advocacy and education in the nine-county MC+ Managed Care service area of western Missouri. Through the project, the LAWMO attorney works closely with four managed care programs, the Missouri Family Support Division, county health departments, schools and LINC, to secure health insurance benefits for qualified families with children.
- *Municipal Court Defense Unit.* Funded by a contract with the City of Kansas City, a LAWMO staff of ten full-time attorneys provide representation to indigents charged with jailable offenses in the city's municipal courts. In 2006, these attorneys handled 7,034 cases so that every person facing a serious charge was assured constitutionally mandated and highly skilled legal representation.
- *Medical-Legal Partnership with Children's Mercy Hospital.* With funding by the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, LAWMO in partnership with Children's Mercy Hospital tackles the issues which prevent successful medical treatment outcomes—issues such as unhealthy housing conditions, domestic violence, and lack of access to preventive care programs.
- *Migrant Farmworkers Project.* Provides services to migrant farmworkers and their families who work in rural Missouri and need help with issues of immigration status, public benefits, education for their children and locating and managing health services.
- *Volunteer Attorney Project.* Coordinates over 1,000 attorneys in private practice who volunteer to provide pro bono legal representation to low-income clients.

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