



Vermont Legal Aid Seeks an Executive Director

Vermont Legal Aid (VLA), one of the state's largest law firms, is where Vermonters turn when they face a civil legal problem that threatens their rights, shelter, income, health, or well-being. We strive to advance fairness and justice in the civil legal system, address the social and economic barriers faced by our clients, and confront the underlying causes of poverty, discrimination, and inequality. Our services are free.

VLA seeks an Executive Director to lead this nationally recognized, statewide civil legal aid organization as we begin a new chapter. VLA has a staff of 104, five offices and an annual budget of over \$9.5 million. This is an exciting opportunity for an attorney leader with vision and creativity to build on the solid base established by current leadership and take VLA into the future. The current Executive Director has been our leader for over 30 years, and we are looking for the next ED to take the helm as we refresh our mission and goals for the next several decades.

What Does the Next VLA Look Like?

VLA is strong. The next Executive Director will have the commitment of Board and Staff to engage in an exciting process of envisioning the future of VLA. Personnel, Board support, and financial resources for planning and training exist. A strong administrative unit will support the new ED and their leadership. The ED will guide VLA in this process of moving the organization into its next iteration. All staff are fully committed to VLA's mission and values and are excited to welcome a new leader.

The next Executive Director will be a visionary leader with a demonstrated passion for serving and advocating on behalf of low-income and other vulnerable populations, including families with young children, people with disabilities, New American communities, veterans, seniors, and other individuals impacted by poverty or marginalized by other factors.

Candidates who are highly attuned to fundraising, brand-building, and goal-setting are desired for this role. The successful candidate for this position could be someone with experience serving as the face of a nonprofit organization and providing executive-level management, as well as someone now poised to step into this level of leadership.

VLA's five offices are located in Burlington, Montpelier, Rutland, Springfield, and St. Johnsbury. The Administrative Unit has historically been in Burlington, our largest city. The workplace and schedule of the Executive Director are subject to negotiation and VLA is open to considering your proposal. Remote work or a hybrid arrangement will be considered.

For the current work of VLA, spanning eleven broad projects, see below.

VLA's Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

Vermont Legal Aid believes everyone in Vermont should have equal access to legal services regardless of their race, ethnicity, language, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexuality, ability, mental health, income status, age, or education.

We are committed to being accessible and welcoming and we pledge that all community members will be treated with respect and courtesy. We recognize the additional challenges experienced by those who are unfamiliar with the legal system or have limited English proficiency and will strive to work with them as partners to address their legal needs and the causes of poverty, discrimination, and inequality.

We believe it is the responsibility of legal services organizations to help ensure that people who historically have been excluded from fully participating in the United States' legal system have the same access to legal services as the most privileged in our society. If you cannot afford legal representation, you are much less likely to secure justice.

We believe that diversity produces a more dynamic, creative, and thoughtful community. Accordingly, Vermont Legal Aid supports diversity of thought, culture and life experience among our staff and our community.

Further, Vermont Legal Aid seeks to leverage the diversity of our community to create an inclusive environment where members of the staff and our client community feel supported, listened to and encouraged to succeed. We seek to continually develop and nurture cultural competency as an organizational asset so that we may harness all of the community's strengths and foster inclusivity.

Our commitment to cultural competency requires a practice of sincere inquiry and learning about the differences and similarities in our community, and the ability to incorporate that learning into skills we apply in our work and our relationships. As a leader in the Vermont legal community, Vermont Legal Aid will be a catalyst for change by embracing diversity and promoting inclusion to ensure equity for all people. We are committed, through our practices and policies, to fostering cultural competence, inclusiveness, understanding, acceptance and respect in order to more effectively fight poverty, discrimination, and inequality.

The Executive Director will:

- Engage and inspire staff members, board members, clients, and other stakeholders in realizing VLA's mission, and refining and adapting that mission to meet new challenges and opportunities;
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of program activities, including bringing a racial justice lens to delivery of legal services, hiring, retention, and leadership development;
- Hire, supervise, evaluate, and meet regularly with the management team to provide direction, advice, and oversight as appropriate;
- Ensure the organization's financial health and stability by developing and maintaining sound financial planning and management systems, including preparation of budgets and oversight of financial systems and controls;
- Develop VLA's culture, emphasizing inclusiveness, openness, transparency, compassion and supportiveness;
- Articulate and achieve the desired balance between effective systemic reform work and high-quality individual client assistance;
- Maintain VLA's leadership role among city, state, and national poverty advocacy organizations and coordinate its work with those groups;
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of VLA through on-going careful cultivation of long-term legislative support for VLA funding, pursuit of new state and federal grants, and development of additional financial resources needed to sustain and grow VLA;
- Serve as an effective ambassador for VLA, by nurturing collaborative relationships with funders, legislators, private bar and judicial leaders, private donors, and business and civic organizations throughout the state;
- Maintain and grow an effective communications program designed to continually enhance VLA's profile in the legal community, with client communities, and with the public at large; and

- Coordinate organizational goals, visions and activities with its partner organization, Legal Services Vermont,¹ to ensure the maintenance of a unified legal services delivery system.

The successful Executive Director candidate will:

- Be a licensed attorney in good standing, with significant legal experience, eligible for admission to the Vermont Bar in a reasonable period of time;
- Demonstrate a passion for social and racial justice;
- Possess exceptional leadership skills and have substantial management experience, such as in a successful legal services program, social services agency, or other organization;
- Have grant writing and/or fundraising experience;
- Understand financial matters, including development of budgets, compliance with grant and contract requirements, and financial oversight;
- Be skilled at managing scarce resources and allocating resources appropriately;
- Support the role of technology in client services and organizational efficiency;
- Exhibit excellent communication skills and the ability to inspire the trust and confidence of the staff, board members, client communities, and other stakeholders and allies, including the will and ability to engage in difficult conversations as circumstances may dictate;
- Champion diversity, equity and inclusion, and be culturally responsive;
- Have experience in building a team environment, encouraging professional development of staff, and supporting staff in the program's work; and
- Convey vision, integrity, courage, intelligence, creativity, energy, and humor equal to the challenges of this demanding position.

APPLICATION PROCESS

VLA is assisted in its search for a new executive director by:

Patricia Pap, Consultant
Management Information Exchange
105 Chauncy St., Fl 6, Ste 3
Boston, MA 02111

Materials should be submitted electronically to ppap@mielegalaid.org in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Candidates with questions about the position or process are encouraged to contact her at the email address above or at 508-737-4010.

Screening of applicants begins immediately and will continue until the time of selection. To receive full consideration, you are encouraged to submit your application materials by October 14, 2022. Please submit a letter expressing your interest in the position, your qualifications for the job, bar status, and what you hope to contribute to the organization's future. Please include a resume and the names and contact information for three professional references.

Salary depends on experience based on a competitive public interest salary scale. Benefits include a generous leave policy, excellent family health insurance, life & disability insurance, and a 401(k) plan, the opportunity for a remote work or a hybrid arrangement, and the camaraderie of a team of committed advocates for social, racial, and economic justice.

¹ VLA partners with Legal Services Vermont (LSV), Vermont's Legal Services Corporation-funded agency. LSV coordinates case representation with VLA and operates the statewide legal helpline and legal services website.

About Vermont Legal Aid:

Our projects:

- Disability Law Project
- Elder Law Project
- Health Care Advocate Project
- Homeowner Legal Assistance Project
- Housing Discrimination Law Project
- Housing for Everyone Law Project
- Medical-Legal Partnership Project
- Mental Health Law Project
- Poverty Law Project
- Vermont Long-Term Care Ombudsman Project
- Victims' Rights Project

VLA revenues come from a wide variety of public and private sources. VLA and Legal Services Vermont, (LSV), Vermont's Legal Services Corporation-funded agency, share a Board of Trustees. In addition to working together with LSV to serve more than 25,000 individual clients annually, VLA focuses on achieving systemic change for its client communities and has a robust presence in the Vermont Legislature, before state agencies, and in the State's Supreme Court.

Supporting the Executive Director, the Leadership team includes the Deputy Director, three fiscal staff members, including a Chief Financial Officer, an HR Administrator, Project Directors for each of the program's substantive projects, and an IT staff of three.

Read about VLA's core values and commitment to diversity and inclusion at work at: [VLA Core Values](#) and [VLA Diversity Statement](#) and our services for clients at VTlawhelp.org.