



Maine Equal Justice is hiring a Housing Paralegal to help us increase housing stability for renters in Maine!

Job Summary: Maine Equal Justice has an immediate opening for a highly organized, detail-oriented individual for a full-time Housing Paralegal. This position is made possible by grant funding that expires in January 2027. MEJ cannot guarantee sustaining the position beyond that date.

The Housing Paralegal provides direct service to individuals and families that contact Maine Equal Justice (MEJ) for assistance with housing, public benefits, and other basic needs. The paralegal is primarily responsible for conducting intakes, providing advice and referrals, and advocacy under attorney supervision on behalf of clients as appropriate. The paralegal is also responsible for community engagement, outreach, and education to strengthen access to legal services by eligible individuals. The Housing Paralegal is expected to provide support on cases in all state courts and on know-your-rights trainings and outreach at community events.

Maine Equal Justice is a nonprofit legal aid and economic justice organization located in Augusta, Maine that represents the interests of people with low income in the state legislature, before the courts and administrative agencies, and through outreach and education in the community. Maine Equal Justice works to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity in Maine, ensuring that people can access adequate health care, food, income security, and higher education and training.

Representative Tasks:

- Receives and evaluates client need for assistance through MEJ's online, in person and phone intake systems, referrals from partner organizations, and at courthouse assistance projects and determines method of response.
- Consistently enters and maintains accurate client data in MEJ database.
- Works closely with MEJ attorney staff to develop appropriate responses to client requests.
- Works with clients to gather information and documents necessary for advice or representation.
- Provides response, including referral information, which may include advice or advocacy under attorney supervision.
- Tracks client contacts and inquiries to analyze trends and opportunities for systemic intervention and for grant-reporting purposes.
- Identifies individuals who may want to engage in advocacy activities and refers those individuals to the organizing team.
- Supports and attends trainings and outreach events in the community.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- General knowledge of the federal and state laws and agency rules relating to poverty issues including housing and safety net programs like TANF, SNAP, and MaineCare.
- Knowledge of other programs and resources throughout the state, including both legal services programs and programs that provide services or benefits to low income people.
- Ability to differentiate between a systemic issue and individual problem.
- Ability to evaluate client issues and concerns (sometimes beyond what they indicate that they are calling about) and make appropriate referrals.
- Ability to provide culturally competent and linguistically appropriate and trauma-informed services to clients, including through the use of telephone and in-person interpreters as needed.
- Ability to find answers to individual problems by researching statutes, program manuals, and/or talking to appropriate experts.
- Ability to listen to clients, gather necessary information and write up their stories either for presentation in the form of testimony or in the form of an intake.
- Knowledge of computer programs including Microsoft Office and G-Suite. Salesforce experience is helpful but not required.

Minimum Qualifications:

A three (3) year combination of education, training, and experience in working on issues that affect low-income people, including direct client contact and/or lived experience. General knowledge of and experience with the legal system. Bachelor's degree preferred. Paralegal experience preferred, but not required.

It is anticipated that many clients seeking help with housing issues will speak Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Lingala. Fluency in any of these languages and/or experience working with interpreters is preferred, but not required.

Licensing/Registration/Certification Requirements: None

Special Requirements: None

Location: This is a hybrid position. Weekly in person presence working in Portland may be necessary. Travel throughout the service area should be expected, with anticipated regular travel to Portland, Lewiston, and Biddeford.

Salary and Benefits: Salary range of \$56,000-\$60,000 based on experience. Health and dental insurance are provided, with premiums and deductibles mostly covered by employer, as well as employer-paid life insurance and short- and long-term disability insurance. MEJ offers retirement accounts with an annual employer contribution, generous vacation time (five weeks vacation in first year of employment), generous sick time, and 14 paid holidays per year.

To Apply: Submit a letter of interest and a resume addressed to Frank D'Alessandro, Director of Legal Services, and emailed to **admin@mejp.org** (PDF's preferred). Resumes submitted without a letter of interest will not be considered. Applications will be accepted until February 16th, 2025 (or until the position is filled.)

More information about Maine Equal Justice can be found at MaineEqualJustice.org. We encourage people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, and those with lived experience of poverty to apply. Maine Equal Justice is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Thinking about applying? *Research shows that people from historically excluded communities tend to apply to jobs only when they check every box in the posting. If you're currently reading this and hesitating to apply for that reason, we encourage you to go for it! Let us know how your lived experience and passion set you apart.*