



**Maine Equal Justice is hiring a Public Benefits Attorney to help us increase economic security and opportunity in Maine!**

**Job Summary:** Maine Equal Justice (MEJ) has an immediate opening for a passionate, mission-driven individual for a full-time Public Benefits Attorney position. This position is made possible by grant funding that expires in January 2027. MEJ cannot guarantee sustaining the position beyond that date.

The Attorney is responsible for handling a range of civil legal needs of low-income (200% FPL and below) residents of Maine with a focus on helping clients access safety net programs like TANF, SNAP, and MaineCare. As a litigator, the attorney will be in court or in administrative hearings on a regular basis to provide representation to clients. The attorney is expected to handle cases before state agencies, in all state courts, and federal court. The attorney is also expected to provide supervision support for the work of legal services paralegals, both in the provision of limited legal assistance and in other work specific to the attorney's caseload.

In addition to direct representation, the attorney is responsible for supporting MEJ's systemic advocacy through impact litigation and legal support on administrative and legislative advocacy. The attorney is also responsible for community engagement and networking to increase access to legal services by eligible individuals.

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:**

- Handle legal work in accordance with MEJ relevant ethical and professional responsibilities;
- Develop special expertise on issues related to TANF and SNAP and serve as a resource for program staff and volunteers in this area;
- Accept cases consistent with program priorities and funder requirements;
- Maintain client files in such a way that other staff can provide coverage during leave or in an emergency;
- Ensure that all work-related communications (including correspondence and email) are handled in a professional manner;

- Act as a valued contributor and supportive colleague to other members of the Legal Services Team and to the organization as a whole;
- Provide appropriate paralegal support;
- Actively participate in regular legal services meetings, and other office discussions;
- Stay current in legal developments impacting work and utilize training opportunities that will strengthen trial and client skills on an ongoing basis;
- Update or develop client education materials in plain language for use by the general public within areas of focus;
- Identify and communicate effectively with individuals seeking legal assistance, including people in crisis and those who are at risk because of cultural, racial, medical or communication barriers (including those with limited English proficiency, who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, who are blind, or visually impaired, those who are illiterate or have low literacy levels, and those with mental health challenges);
- Provide outgoing outreach and education to a diverse range of local, state, and national organizations and collaborations that work with low-income people to promote increased enforcement of legal rights and appropriate referrals to MEJ;
- Utilize opportunities to engage with the private bar and public sector attorneys through activities or initiatives that will strengthen understanding and support of equal justice issues and/or the work of MEJ;

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

- Commitment to and clear analysis of economic and racial justice and the ability to incorporate that analysis into their work.
- Ability to build a strong knowledge base and expertise in the area of TANF and SNAP law and policy.
- Knowledge of additional programs and resources throughout the state that provide services or benefits to low-income people.
- Ability to evaluate a community members' issues and concerns (sometimes beyond what they indicate that they are calling about) and make appropriate referrals.
- Strong problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations and ability to research through statutes, program manuals, and/or talking to appropriate experts.
- Strong organizational skills to manage competing priorities and deadlines.
- Ability to work in a collaborative, rapid-paced environment.
- Ability to work sensitively with individuals/families with low income.
- Ability to work with a variety of individuals in coalition and as a team.
- Knowledge of computer programs including Microsoft Office and G-Suite. Salesforce experience is helpful but not required.

### **Minimum Qualifications:**

A four (4) year combination of education, training, and/or experience in working on issues that affect low-income people, including direct client contact. Knowledge and

experience of the legal system and substantive and procedural law. Law degree required. Knowledge of a spoken language in addition to English is preferred but not required.

**Licensing/Registration/Certification Requirements:** Admitted to practice law in Maine.

**Location:** This is a hybrid position. There is an expectation to work some days from Portland or Augusta with flexibility to work some remotely as well. Travel throughout the service area should be expected, as well as to court hearings, statewide trainings and meetings.

**Salary and Benefits:** Salary range of \$68,000 - 72,000 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](mailto: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](http://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.*