Executive Director

Minnesota Justice Foundation

Summary:

The Minnesota Justice Foundation (“MJF”) seeks an Executive Director to lead its mission: to bring legal services to more Minnesotans by connecting law students with volunteer and clerkship opportunities at legal agencies that advise and represent Minnesotans who cannot otherwise afford to get the help they need.

Organizational Overview:

MJF plays a unique and critical role among agencies that provide legal services to under-represented and often vulnerable Minnesotans. Through its Summer Clerkship Program, MJF manages a competitive selection process for law students who are awarded paid clerkships at legal-services offices throughout Minnesota. Through its Law School Public Service Program, MJF serves as a one-stop connection between students seeking to volunteer at and gain experience from legal-services offices that rely on volunteers to stretch budget dollars. And through its Street Law program, MJF trains law students to go in to Twin Cities high-school classrooms to teach at-risk students understand their legal rights and the basic rights and obligations of citizenship in a democratic society.

Because of the dedication and hard work of its five staff members, MJF has a large impact: It partners with 130 legal services providers across Minnesota and, in the 2017-2018 academic year, connected law students with 1,100 volunteer placements in which they provided 22,000 hours of service to 8,000 clients.

Organizational History:

MJF was founded in 1982 by law students who were concerned that federal budget cuts threatened the ability of low-income and otherwise under-represented citizens to receive needed legal representation. As do many in the legal profession, the students believed that lawyers and law students have a duty to serve those who cannot afford to engage counsel on their own; unlike many, the students committed themselves to calling attention to the need for legal services and to creating volunteer and pro bono opportunities for law students and lawyers.

Mission Statement:

MJF strives for justice by creating opportunities for law students to perform public interest and pro bono legal services.
Core Values:

Social Justice. MJF recognizes that many people in our society are unable to protect their rights and to obtain justice due to their inability to afford legal services.

Professional Responsibility. MJF believes that it is a privilege to be trained in the law, and that it is the duty of law students and lawyers to exercise the privilege in service to the community.

Inspiration. MJF seek to instill in law students, and in all lawyers, an ethic of providing high quality public interest and pro bono legal services.

Integrity. MJF upholds high ethical standards and vigilantly protects its role as an honest broker of public interest and pro bono opportunities among law students, law schools, public interest agencies, and law firms.

Autonomy. MJF was founded by law students and derives its energy and direction from students. MJF values its autonomy from any particular law school, its administration, and its faculty and from any particular public interest agency.

Diversity. Diversity is central to MJF’s strength. The Board of Directors currently is partnering with staff to develop and further implement new diversity, inclusion, and equity principles into MJF’s everyday work.

Overview of the Executive Director Position:

MJF’s Executive Director has a high impact in and visibility across the Minnesota legal profession as an essential partner in the effort to increase access to legal services.

The Executive Director leads three staff attorneys assigned to work with students at each Minnesota law school: Mitchell Hamline School of Law, the University of St. Thomas School of Law, and the University of Minnesota Law School. The Executive Director also supervises a communications and development associate. The Executive Director interacts frequently with the deans and other leaders of each law school, leaders of legal services agencies, law-firm pro bono coordinators, and the Minnesota Supreme Court Legal Services Advisory Committee, ensuring that law-student volunteers and clerks are connected with the legal services providers that rely on their efforts.

The position will be open due to the upcoming retirement of the current MJF executive director, who was the longest-serving executive director in MJF’s history, having served in the role from 2004 through 2018.
Essential Responsibilities:

Executive Leadership.

- Lead, coach, and develop the staff. Foster a positive professional and organizational culture.
- Develop and deepen relationships with key MJF stakeholders from throughout the Minnesota legal, legal-services, and nonprofit communities.
- Represent MJF in the larger legal services/pro bono community through service on state and community committees and coalitions.
- Develop and maintain a strong Board of Directors by planning and executing effective regular meetings focused on MJF’s objectives.
- Oversee budgeting, finances, financial reporting and audits to ensure MJF’s financial integrity and health.
- Identify new sources of organizational funding.
- Lead and foster efforts to develop and implement principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity principles into MJF’s everyday work.

Programming.

- Final responsibility for the overall direction of programs including Law School Public Service Program, Summer Clerkship Program and Street Law Program and any new initiatives.
- Direct coordination of Summer Clerkship Program, including solicitation and selection of agency partners, development of student application and selection process, and financial operations.

Development.

- Direct responsibility for raising $460,000 annual budget through broad range of state, private, and individual donors and organizational fundraising efforts.
- Direct supervision of volunteer development support staff.

Supervision.

- Direct supervision of Development-Communications Assistant and Program Director
  - Monthly check-ins or more often as work load requires
  - Annual performance reviews
- Shared responsibility with Program Director for supervising three staff attorneys
  - Monthly check-ins
  - Annual performance reviews
  - Bi-annual staff retreats to strengthen staff communication and leadership skills and to strategize about current and future program opportunities.
Qualifications:

The successful candidate will have strong leadership skills, will be highly organized, and will enjoy working with students earning a professional degree. The successful candidate also will have knowledge of the Minnesota legal services community and have experience working with nonprofit organizations. Candidates should also have strong verbal communication, writing, and training skills; a demonstrated ability in program administration, fund development, public relations and financial management; and a demonstrated interest in and commitment to serving low-income and disadvantaged people. A law degree and experience working as a practicing attorney are preferred, but not required.

Compensation and Benefits:

The compensation package for this position is competitive and includes participation in MJF’s benefits plan. Additional benefits include a flexible work schedule, “dress for your day” work standards, and a generous paid time off program.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

MJF is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply.

To Apply:

Please send your resume and a cover letter explaining your interest to Jack Sullivan, President of the Board of Directors, Minnesota Justice Foundation, at: sullivan.jack@dorsey.com.

Applications accepted until July 18, 2019.