

Position Announcement EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

South Middlesex Legal Services (SMLS) seeks an innovative and dynamic leader with passion and vision for meeting the legal needs of low-income people. The new Executive Director must be committed to civil legal aid and possess proven abilities to manage a diverse and talented staff, raise funds and promote the agency's public image, evaluate and plan for organizational and community needs, and work effectively with leaders of other legal aid organizations in Massachusetts.

Program Description

Since 1976, South Middlesex Legal Services, from its office in Framingham, 20 miles west of Boston, has served the needs of low-income, disabled and elderly persons in 36 communities from Dedham to Marlborough. SMLS's attorneys represent battered victims in contested family law cases, protect tenants from becoming homeless, advocate in schools for children with special needs, and help poor, elderly and disabled people obtain disability, welfare and medical benefits. SMLS offers a broad range of legal services including advice, negotiation, litigation, and education. It represents approximately 2,200 low-income and elderly clients each year.

SMLS has a staff of 18 that includes 13 attorneys and assists clients in English, Spanish and Portuguese. SMLS has a good working relationship with the private attorneys practicing in its service area. Its Private Bar Volunteer Program has a panel of approximately 250 private attorneys. It is part of a network of nationally known and respected legal aid programs. The largest single source of funding is from the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation. Massachusetts has developed a regional approach to legal services delivery to coordinate the work of the federal Legal Services Corporation program and those funded by MLAC, which distributes state and IOLTA funds. As a result, SMLS is not bound to any limitations on client representation imposed by the Legal Services Corporation and collaborates with regional partners. It is part of a strong state network of legal aid programs that is supported by expertise and training from the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. SMLS also works collaboratively with human service providers and low income groups to provide civil legal services to people who face barriers to legal justice.

SMLS's annual budget exceeds \$1.2 million and comes from a variety of sources including grants, contracts, donations, and volunteer assistance. Working with the Board of Directors to maintain and increase funding is an essential responsibility of the Executive Director.

Additional information is available at <http://www.smlegal.org>.

Requirements

Candidates must have a J.D. Degree, and be eligible for admission to practice in the Commonwealth. The person hired will be expected to seek admission to the Massachusetts bar promptly, if not already admitted. Candidates should also have 10 years of legal experience. Legal work in housing rights, elder law, rights of the disabled, or family law is desirable.

In addition, SMLS seeks candidates who have:

- Ability to provide innovative direction and leadership to achieve its mission, philosophy, and strategies.
- Proven ability to administer and manage a legal services, advocacy, public interest or human services organization.
- Experience working with people with low-incomes and people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Commitment to promoting and supporting diversity.
- Strong track record in grant work, lobbying and/or other fundraising efforts.
- Excellent writing and oral communication skills.
- Commitment to ongoing strategic planning and needs assessment.

The successful candidate should possess excellent interpersonal skills, display an inclusive leadership style, be flexible to adapt to a changing environment, and maintain an atmosphere of trust and respect.

The position is full-time with health and other employment benefits. Salary will be commensurate with experience.

To apply

SMLS is being assisted in this process by Andrew Steinberg, nonprofit management consultant. Candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to South Middlesex Legal Services, c/o Andrew Steinberg, 17 Hitching Post Rd., Amherst, MA 01002. Applicants should include a telephone number and e-mail address. Inquiries should be directed to Mr. Steinberg at 413-549-6826 or steinberg_a@msn.com.

Submission deadline

Applications should be received by June 6, 2008. Applications will be accepted and considered until the position is filled.

SMLS is a Fair Employment Practices/Equal Employment Opportunity/disability accessible employer committed to maintaining a diverse workplace. Qualified candidates from diverse personal, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds are encouraged to apply