JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION:
Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc. (MHAS) is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and advance the legal rights of children and adults with mental health disabilities in order to maximize autonomy, promote equality, and secure the resources needed to thrive in the community. MHAS assists both children and adults, with an emphasis on obtaining government benefits and services, protecting rights, and fighting discrimination. MHAS also serves as a resource to the community by providing training and technical assistance to attorneys, mental health professionals, consumer and family member groups, and other advocates. In addition, MHAS participates in impact litigation in an effort to improve the lives of people with mental health disabilities.

ANNUAL SALARY: Depends on experience.

FRINGE BENEFITS AND WORK CULTURE:
Generous fringe benefits include paid vacation, holidays, and sick leave; employee health, dental, vision, long term disability, and life insurance; and parking pass and/or Metro card.

MHAS is proud of its collegial, family-friendly culture that respects the work/life balance of its employees. To that end, MHAS is willing to consider flexible work schedules on a case-by-case basis. MHAS also provides employees with frequent wellness opportunities, including staff gatherings featuring food, a daily stretch break, and trainings on stress management and mindfulness.

JOB DESCRIPTION:
MHAS seeks a dynamic and strategic individual to serve as MHAS’ Director of Legal Services, responsible for overseeing the organization’s provision of legal services to children and adults with mental health disabilities. This position will report to the Executive Director and will oversee MHAS’ participation in the LA County Whole Person Care Medical-Legal Partnership, MHAS’ Homelessness Prevention project, MHAS’ Reentry project, MHAS’ Fair Housing project, and MHAS’ Special Education project. Through all of these projects, MHAS provides legal advocacy for and direct legal
services to vulnerable clients to ensure they have the resources and support needed to achieve better mental health outcomes and overall well-being.

The ideal candidate will be able to provide substantive legal supervision and guidance to staff attorneys in several of the following subject areas: housing, eviction defense, public benefits, consumer law, special education, tickets and expungement, and health and mental health law.

Other responsibilities will include overseeing legal training and technical assistance provided by our staff attorneys to both staff and clients at our mental health partner agencies. The Director of Legal Services will also take on such other client and policy work from time to time as deemed appropriate to MHAS’ mission and client goals.

MHAS utilizes a shared leadership model wherein all members of the Senior Leadership Team, including this position, meet regularly to discuss strategies and make decisions about staffing, funding, and programs in order to most effectively fulfill MHAS’ mission.

**JOB RESPONSIBILITIES WILL INCLUDE:**

1. Direct MHAS’ provision of legal services and ensure that MHAS staff attorneys and advocates provide competent legal assistance to clients through advice and counsel, research and writing, negotiation, and administrative/court advocacy;
2. Partner with the Executive Director, Board of Directors, and other members of Senior Leadership to set the organization’s strategic priorities;
3. Manage and coordinate advocacy efforts that seek systemic change on issues arising from these practice areas and advocate for the expanded availability of legal services;
4. Develop, maintain and improve existing relationships with legal and social service organizations and governmental agencies, and develop new relationships with key organizations and agencies relevant to the agency;
5. Interview, hire and train staff attorneys, legal fellows, law clerks, and non-attorney advocates;
6. Plan, assign, and direct work, regularly evaluate performance, and provide ongoing feedback and teaching;
7. Mentor supervising attorneys via regular individual check in meetings;
8. Conduct weekly case review meetings to ensure that legal services provided are consistent with MHAS priorities, policies, and procedures, and that they maximize MHAS’ resources to provide the highest quality in services;
9. Assist with managing grants including tracking progress towards grant deliverables, drafting reports, and overseeing data collection/analysis;
10. Maintain expertise in a broad range of poverty law issues;
11. Oversee and, at times, directly provide technical assistance and training to staff and clients at MHAS’ mental health partner agencies;
12. Help to lead efforts aimed at increasing organizational diversity, equity and inclusion; and
13. Execute other projects and tasks as identified, related to MHAS’s mission.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:
1. J.D. degree and membership in California State Bar.
2. Significant leadership and management experience.
3. Commitment and sensitivity to the rights of people with mental health disabilities and other vulnerable populations.
4. Excellent supervision skills.
5. Demonstrated ability to analyze complex problems and develop creative solutions.
6. Excellent demonstrated people skills and the ability to maintain positive relations with a diverse population.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:
1. Seven+ years legal experience strongly preferred.
2. Experience in the disability rights movement and/or extensive contacts in the disability community.
2. Experience advocating on behalf of vulnerable populations.
3. Spanish language fluency or proficiency helpful but not required.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE:
Submit the following to info@mhas-la.org (state “Employment Application” in subject line):
1. Resume; and
2. Cover letter describing how applicant meets the minimum and desirable qualifications and discussing applicant’s motivation for seeking the position.

MHAS seeks a candidate who is available to begin work in early 2020.

MHAS is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, mental or physical disability, or any other basis protected by law.