

Staff Attorney, Strategic Litigation

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Innocence Project was founded in 1992 by Barry C. Scheck and Peter J. Neufeld at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University to assist the wrongly convicted who could be proven innocent through DNA testing. The Innocence Project's groundbreaking use of DNA technology to free innocent people has provided irrefutable proof that wrongful convictions are not isolated or rare events but instead arise from systemic defects. Now an independent nonprofit organization closely affiliated with Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, the Innocence Project's mission is to free the staggering numbers of innocent people who remain incarcerated and to bring substantive reform to the system responsible for their unjust imprisonment.

JOB SUMMARY

The Post-Conviction Litigation department of the Innocence Project—which works to exonerate wrongly convicted people nationwide based on evidence of actual innocence—seeks to hire two Staff Attorneys (with mid-level or more seasoned experience) to join our team.

Staff Attorneys reinvestigate actual innocence, working with a wide range of forensic and other experts and investigators, in cases that mostly involve life sentences (although a small portion of our docket includes death penalty cases). Staff Attorneys litigate at trial and appellate levels, in state and federal courts around the country. Most often, our cases involve claims based on ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct, false evidence, incentivized testimony, and newly discovered evidence. Our representation is client-centered.

Candidates for a Staff Attorney position must possess superlative legal writing and research skills. Our docket is dynamic and requires extensive motions practice, as well as appellate briefing. Candidates must also have strong advocacy skills and be well equipped, for example, to handle court appearances for everything from evidentiary hearings to oral arguments.

Staff Attorneys are also clinical law teachers, serving as Adjunct Professors at Cardozo School of Law. In this capacity, Staff Attorneys train and supervise law students in the Innocence Project's year-long legal clinic and co-teaching seminars.

In addition, Staff Attorneys must possess strong interpersonal and communication skills, enthusiasm for working collaboratively, and must embrace the Innocence Project's mission to not only correct individual miscarriages of justice, but to also expose and reform the systemic dysfunctions of the criminal legal system—including resource disparities, racial bias, and police and prosecutorial misconduct. Beyond litigating cases on behalf of individual clients, Staff Attorneys also support the Innocence Project's initiatives to improve the criminal legal system through policy and litigation; engage in public education regarding wrongful conviction; write *amicus curie* briefs; and act as a resource and support for attorneys nationwide who likewise challenge the inequities of our criminal legal system.

Staff Attorneys work under the supervision of the Director of Post-Conviction Litigation and supervise a paralegal as well as two to three clinic students.

Staff Attorney positions require 40 hours of in-office work per week at our New York location (remote working is currently supported, consistent with pandemic-related social distancing precautions), plus evening and weekend work as needed. Routine travel to visit clients, investigate cases, and appear in court is expected (although, again, given pandemic related concerns, travel is not currently required).

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- Manage docket of individuals seeking relief from wrongful conviction
- Craft litigation strategy
- Lead litigation teams, including with pro-bono partners, local counsel, and law students
- Direct factual post-conviction re-investigations
- Author motions & briefs in connection with client representation, as well as amicus curie briefs
- Conduct evidentiary hearings
- Represent clients facing retrial after vacatur of conviction
- Conduct oral argument before trial and appellate courts
- Co-teach the Innocence Project legal clinic and supervise law students
- Supervise paralegals
- Work with social workers, and assist with post-release planning for exonerated clients

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- We are hiring for two Staff Attorney positions:
 - 4+ years of litigation experience on behalf of indigent defendants or others accused/convicted of crimes (strong preference for post-conviction, habeas corpus, and/or federal civil rights litigation, and experience in conducting post-conviction factual re-investigations);
 - 8-10 years litigation experience on behalf of indigent defendants or others accused/convicted of crimes (post-conviction, habeas corpus, and/or federal civil rights litigation, and experience in conducting post-conviction factual re-investigations)
- Working knowledge of DNA and/or other forensic disciplines preferred
- Interest in legal education and teaching
- A demonstrated and abiding commitment to social justice
- Bilingual (Spanish) is a plus

KEY COMPETENCIES

- Strong research, writing, and analytic skills
- Strong advocacy skills
- Experience with complex records and presenting compelling, fact-driven narratives
- Client-centered approach to legal representation and demonstrated commitment to indigent defense and working to change the criminal legal system
- Hard-working, ability to work independently at the same time as being collaborative
- Excellent interpersonal and verbal communication skills
- Interest in working with a diverse population
- Ability to assess work of students and paralegals, and constructively supervise their work

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The salary for this position is highly competitive and the Innocence Project offers an excellent benefits package, including health, dental and vision insurance, Flexible Spending Account, 401k plan with company-match, and paid Transitcheks.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Innocence Project considers the diversity of its workforce to be vital to our organization's success in meeting its mission. We strongly encourage applicants from all cultures, races, educational backgrounds, life experiences, socio-economic classes, sexual orientations, age, gender, and physical abilities to apply. We also strongly encourage applicants with personal or family experience with the criminal justice system and/or incarceration to apply.

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, it is our policy not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, familial status, marital status, predisposing genetic characteristics, actual or perceived domestic violence victim status, unemployment status, caregiver status, or any other category protected by law.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply, please visit [Paycom](#). Upload your cover letter and resume as (last name. first name. cover letter/resume). Only applications with cover letters will be considered. Information submitted through this secure site is kept confidential. Due to the large volume of applications, we are unable to give applicant updates by phone.