

Staff Attorney, Post-Conviction Litigation

ABOUT THE INNOCENCE PROJECT

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. To learn more, please visit www.innocenceproject.org.

ABOUT THE POSITION

The Post-Conviction Litigation department of the Innocence Project—which works to exonerate wrongly convicted people nationwide based on evidence of actual innocence—is expanding in connection with a newly adopted 5-year strategic plan. We now seek to hire one or more Staff Attorneys (with at least four years of experience) to join our team.

Staff Attorneys reinvestigate actual innocence, working with a wide range of forensic and other experts and investigators. Primarily, our dockets focus on using DNA technology to prove innocence, and include cases with claims based on newly discovered evidence, ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct, false evidence, and incentivized testimony (among others). Staff Attorneys litigate at trial and appellate levels, in state and federal courts around the country. Our representation is client-centered.

Clinical education is an important dimension of the Post-Conviction Litigation Department, and our 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.

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 (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).

All Innocence Project employees must embrace, respect and value the rich diversity of perspectives and experience of a diverse and heterogeneous staff. We recognize and appreciate that our work is better for having varied participants and thought partners.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

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.

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.

ESSENTIAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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
- 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 AND EXPERIENCE

We are hiring for one or more 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);
- 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 diverse range of people
- Ability to assess work of students and paralegals, and constructively supervise their work
- Must be able to work with groups of diverse individuals in respectful, equitable, and inclusive ways.
- Enthusiasm for the work of the Innocence Project and for social justice, including a demonstrated commitment to public interest
- Shares values of equity, excellence, collaboration, humanity, integrity, respect, and accountability

COMPENSATION, BENEFITS & PERKS

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. While the office is currently remote in consideration of the ongoing pandemic, once commuting into the office (located in downtown Manhattan, New York) becomes again viable we will also offer company-paid transportation benefits.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

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. Individuals with personal connections to the criminal legal system are strongly encouraged 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 [JazzHR](#). Upload a cover letter expressing your interest in the role and the organization's work, and a resume titled with your name (last name. first name. cover letter/resume). Only applications with cover letters will be considered complete applications. 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 or direct email.

*****Applications for these positions will be considered on a rolling basis until the posts are filled.*****

Salary Range

\$108,830 (4 years experience) - \$159,457 (15 years experience) - salary scale commensurate with experience