TEXAS CIVIL RIGHTS PROJECT
LEGAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR, RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE
Alamo, Houston, Dallas or San Antonio, Texas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) is a community lawyering organization, boldly serving the movement for equality and justice in and out of the courts, and seeking to advance a vision of a Texas in which all communities can thrive with dignity and justice, and without fear. To advance this work, TCRP is seeking a Legal Program Director to lead its Racial and Economic Justice (REJ) program, which in recent years has engaged extensively in legal and advocacy work on behalf of migrant and border communities. This position is part of TCRP’s Leadership Team, which works together to run the organization, and reports directly to TCRP’s President.

For more than thirty years, TCRP has been a committed partner to community organizers, families and advocacy groups across the state. Whether through litigation or other means of legal advocacy, the attorneys and advocates at TCRP work to dismantle mass incarceration, discrimination in voting and civic participation, and injustices occurring at the Texas border, all under a race equity lens. As community lawyers, they work with coalitions of community-based organizations to identify injustices facing Texas communities and then develop impactful, system-changing solutions using litigation and other tools. TCRP partners with communities across Texas to serve the rising movement for social justice in three key areas: Voting Rights, Criminal Injustice Reform, and Racial and Economic Justice, which has recently focused on issues of immigrant justice.

Reporting to TCRP’s President, this Legal Program Director will develop a bold and thoughtful strategy that builds on TCRP’s deep roots and critical work in migrant and border justice in the Rio Grande Valley, and leverage opportunities to expand TCRP’s footprint in immigrant justice on a statewide level. The Director’s primary work includes collaboratively setting this vision; leading, supervising and mentoring a team that focuses on litigation and advocacy; working in coalition with grassroots organizations and other partners; helping coordinate communication and advocacy campaigns to draw attention to immigrant and border justice issues; and, as a member of the Leadership Team, helping to advance the internal goals of the organization, including those around racial equity and justice.

The ideal candidate will, first and foremost, be an inclusive, passionate leader committed to fighting for immigrant and border justice in Texas. They will be an experienced litigator with the proven ability to develop and lead successful complex litigation. They will have a deep respect for community-centered lawyering and experience working in coalition with community-based organizations. They will be a
proven mentor with the ability to set vision and align strategies in collaboration with others and bring strong communication and interpersonal skills. The new Director must be licensed to practice law in Texas or able to waive into the Texas bar (which is permitted after 5 years of practice). While this position is traditionally based in Alamo (in the Rio Grande Valley), applicants based in or willing to move to Houston, Dallas or San Antonio will also be considered. If not based in the Rio Grande Valley, this position will require extensive travel to the border.

This search is assisted by Callie Carroll and Yuniya Khan of the national search firm, NPAG. Application instructions can be found at the end of this document.

ABOUT TCRP AND THE RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE LEGAL PROGRAM

Founded by James “Jim” C. Harrington in 1990, TCRP has fought in the courts for the rights of Texans with disabilities, immigrants, workers in need of fair labor conditions, and others. In February 2016, Mimi Marziani, a nationally recognized expert in voting rights with disabilities, immigrants, workers in need of fair labor conditions, and others. In February 2016, Mimi Marziani, a nationally recognized expert in voting rights and rights issues in Texas, became one of the leading programs fighting to uphold asylum protections and human rights at the Texas-Mexico border. The program made global headlines for being on the frontlines of efforts to stop the federal government from systematically separating immigrant families in 2018. Some of TCRP’s victories and activities in this area include: using a multi-prong litigation strategy to stop family separation; winning a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security and their secret, illegal hotel detentions; successfully suing the State of Texas when it sought to deny birth certificates to babies born to undocumented mothers; leading a creative advocacy and litigation campaign to defend landowners from the Trump Administration’s efforts to build a border wall in South Texas; and pushing against the criminalization of immigrants and the militarization of the border.

The program’s current work is primarily in border and migrant justice areas, with a focus on cases related to civil rights abuses by federal immigration agents; over-enforcement of immigration laws by law enforcement entities; family separation and asylum; and eminent domain in connection with the border wall. Given this years-long shift in focus from racial and economic justice to migrant and border justice, coupled with the current and potential changes in immigration policies across the state and the country, the REJ program is now in a position to create a new vision and identity, along with a new program name, as they move into the future.

Learn more about TCRP at www.texascivilrightsproject.org.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE NEW LEGAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The next Legal Program Director will have the opportunity to develop creative and effective strategies to tackle some of the most pressing immigrant rights issues in Texas, and particularly at the southern border. TCRP undertakes this work with a deep sense of accountability to Texas communities, especially...
those who live in and around the southern border and the Rio Grande Valley. This work requires a leader with sharp federal litigation chops and team mentorship skills who can set a vision for TCRP’s work in this area and engage in the following opportunities and challenges:

**Develop and execute a strategy built upon a vision for TCRP’s statewide impact on immigration and border justice.** The new Director will collaborate with staff to create a clear, proactive and compelling vision for the REJ program, built around current strengths and future opportunities. They will lead the team through this visioning process, including possibly a new program name aligned with the program’s vision and goals. Building on this vision, the new Director will develop a bold and thoughtful strategy that builds on TCRP’s deep roots and critical work in migrant and border justice in the Rio Grande Valley, and leverage opportunities to expand TCRP’s footprint in immigrant justice on a statewide level.

**Lead the REJ team and build on staff team’s commitment and passion by investing in their professional development.** The REJ team is a group of talented, passionate attorneys and other legal professionals committed to migrant and border justice in the Rio Grande Valley. In addition to supervising case development and investigations, the new Director will actively seek opportunities to mentor staff, helping to deepen their skills in litigation, advocacy, and community lawyering. This includes identifying innovative strategies to build cases, driving advocacy campaigns, forming and maintaining strategic partnerships, and providing guidance and support to attorneys and paralegals. They will support the team as a strong and trustworthy advocate within the organization, listening to and ensuring key needs are heard and uplifted. The new Director will foster a culture of boldness, trust, transparency, and equity within the team and across TCRP.

**Leverage the REJ program’s expertise and track record to raise awareness of TCRP’s border and immigrants’ rights work in Texas.** TCRP has a strong presence in the Rio Grande Valley, and is highly respected as a leading organization focused on migration and border justice issues in the area. The new Director will leverage these strengths to develop timely campaigns and investigations that move the needle for immigrant justice. In collaboration with TCRP’s Communications and Advocacy team, the new Director will create and implement strategies for bringing broader recognition of TCRP’s work in the area, including published writings and other forms of engagement with leading media platforms, and engaging with policymakers and lawmakers throughout Texas.

**Collaborate with other Legal Directors on program strategy.** TCRP’s success relies on deeply collaborative relationships among Directors and staff. The new Director will explore opportunities to build cases and campaigns that intersect with TCRP’s other legal program areas, enabling integration and alignment across the team and increasing learning from each other and from grassroots partners. The new Director will also support the work of colleagues in communications and development as they build campaigns to drive visibility, community support, and funding to increase impact.

**Partner across TCRP to drive equity, diversity and inclusion.** Grounded in TCRP’s commitment to justice and equality and its organizational values, the new Director will bring an equity lens to all aspects of strategy, priority setting, team development, and community engagement. The new Director will support TCRP’s work to reflect the communities it serves and build a culture of inclusion, continuous growth, openness, and antiracism. The new Director will help create a respectful and equitable work environment for staff at all levels of the organization and will ensure the same experience for clients, partners, and stakeholders.
QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPENSATION

The ideal candidate will be an entrepreneurial and effective litigator, strategist and manager with an unrelenting commitment to justice on behalf of all. While it’s possible that no one candidate will have all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will be an experienced attorney and have many of the following skills, qualifications, and abilities:

- Sincere commitments to equity and inclusion, social justice, and immigration reform and border justice;
- Exceptional litigation skills and at least seven (7) years of federal or state court civil litigation experience, including complex case development;
- Deep passion for and commitment to the Rio Grande Valley area, its culture, challenges, opportunities, and strengths; ability to spend a significant amount of time there, if based elsewhere;
- Three to five years of demonstrated success inspiring and leading highly talented and diverse teams, preferably of legal and paralegal staff; proven success hiring, training, conducting performance evaluations and mentoring teams;
- Initiative, vision, creativity, and a demonstrated willingness to take calculated risks in crafting and executing strategies;
- A deep personal commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion; proven success in engaging with and working in partnership with diverse communities; lived experience that informs an authentic understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable communities and a sophisticated understanding of the historical nature of structural power differences with a lens into how that impacts social justice efforts today;
- Experience analyzing public policy issues, including an ability to synthesize and summarize large amounts of information and to focus quickly on the essence of an issue;
- Excellent communication skills, including legal writing, interpersonal and public communication skills, and an ability to translate vision and strategy into external messaging;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including maturity, keen judgment, the ability to facilitate challenging conversations and quickly read interpersonal dynamics, and the ability to work with people from a wide array of backgrounds, perspectives, and personalities, and across projects;
- Ability to create a positive atmosphere in a high-energy, fast-paced work environment; excellent and consistent attention to detail and the ability to prioritize and meet deadlines;
- Proven ability to foster an optimistic, resilient work environment, especially in the face of adversity;
- A personal drive for self-reflection, improvement, and learning;
- Patience, a sense of humor, gravitas and a high tolerance for ambiguity; the ability to adapt quickly to change; and a natural orientation towards collaboration;
- The ability and willingness to travel regionally;
- Spanish fluency is a plus;
- Admission to the Texas Bar or ability to waive into the Texas Bar.
Compensation

The expected salary range is $110,000 - $125,000 per year, commensurate with experience. TCRP also offers excellent benefits, professional development opportunities and a deep commitment to a meaningful work-life balance. Benefits include: employer-paid health, dental, and vision insurance, four weeks paid vacation, eight weeks paid family leave (with opportunities to extend leave to 14 paid weeks in total), medical reimbursement benefit, a robust professional development budget annually, and extensive holidays, including a two-week winter break at the end of December.

TO APPLY

Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Applications including a cover letter describing your interest and qualifications, your resume (in Word format), and where you learned of the position should be sent to: TCRP-REJLPD@npag.com. In order to expedite the internal sorting and reviewing process, please type your name (Last, First) as the only contents in the subject line of your e-mail.

TCRP values a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture — people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, and people from other underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.

TCRP does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, creed, religion, physical ability, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, previous incarceration, veteran status, union membership or activism, or any other characteristic protected by local, state or federal law.