



Water Protector Legal Collective

Job Opening: Line 3 Defense Legal Fellow

Please apply ASAP. Applications accepted until both positions filled

The Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC) and the Water Protector Legal Collective (WPLC) are coordinating to provide two Minnesota based, movement-aligned, criminal defense attorneys for the next two years. Together, the Line 3 Legal Fellows will allow us to provide Water Protectors who engaged in pipeline resistance and do not have adequate direct representation with the highest quality pro bono criminal defense possible.

Position Description

The primary responsibility of these fellows will be to provide movement aligned, defendant-centered legal representation for the duration of a criminal case - from arraignment to trial, dismissal, and/or sentencing - for up to 100 Water Protectors each. The Fellows will coordinate with our groups, the Pipeline Legal Action Network (PLAN), Line 3 spokes council, and Indigenous leadership to ensure that: 1. All defendants receive legal representation from either them directly, our network, a public defender, or an attorney of their choice; 2. All high-risk defendants (Indigenous people, LGTBQIA+, those facing felony charges) receive direct representation from them or a highly-skilled defense attorney; and 3. Movement-aligned legal arguments (necessity defense, treaty law, cultural genocide) are incorporated into their defense whenever feasible. Fellows will also be expected to organize and participate in defendant-led legal support structures and working groups to the extent feasible (PLAN and Line 3 Legal Spokes Council), as well as collaborative attorney coordination. The fellows will work together but one will directly report to the Executive Direct of CLDC and the other will report to the Legal Director of WPLC.

Required Qualifications:

- Admitted to practice law in Minnesota;
- Willingness to primarily reside in northern Minnesota for duration of contract;
- Strong desire to contribute to the climate movement and Indigenous led pipeline resistance;
- Willingness to work 40 hours per week, with a somewhat flexible schedule;
- Able to learn quickly, meet deadlines and perform multiple tasks while maintaining attention to detail;
- Excellent diverse people skills, culturally appropriate, anti-racist, anti-oppression orientation; and strong team member desired;
- Ability to handle a caseload of approximately 100-125 clients (will include mass defense/group representation and many 'similarly situated' defendant cases);
- Experience in community organizing and/or climate/social justice activism strongly desired; and
- Experience with activist security culture and technology strongly desired.

Compensation and Benefits:

Pay is \$60,000-\$70,000 per year DPE. Holidays, sick leave, and vacation package included. Healthcare coverage will also be provided. MN bar dues renewal and malpractice insurance will be reimbursed by the employer.

Application Process:

Please submit a cover letter, resumé, legal writing sample, and three references to office@cldc.org. Interviews will be conducted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

No phone calls please. If you have specific questions about the position or application process, you may reach out by email before applying. We plan to begin interviewing immediately. Applicants will need to be able to start work within two weeks of receiving an offer.

About Us: United in the Protection of Rights, Lands, and Waters

The Civil Liberties Defense Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports movements working to dismantle the political and economic structures at the root of social inequality and environmental destruction. Founded in 2003, CLDC is the only organization in the U.S. providing a combination of unparalleled free legal defense, proactive civil litigation, education, and strategic resources to frontline social change activists in order to strengthen and embolden climate, Indigenous rights, racial justice, and other progressive movements.

The Water Protector Legal Collective provides legal support and advocacy for Indigenous peoples, the Earth, and climate justice movements. Born out of the NoDAPL protest movement, WPLC's founding mission has been to serve as the on-the-ground legal team for the Indigenous-led resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) at Standing Rock, North Dakota. Since it first came at the request of tribal leadership and set up the first office in a tent in Oceti Sakowin, WPLC has been providing legal defense and offense to the Water Protector Movement.