

# Legal Aid of East Tennessee Seeks an Executive Director



Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) seeks an Executive Director to lead this nonprofit law firm whose mission is to ensure justice for elderly, abused and low income individuals by providing a broad range of civil legal services. Over the course of more than 50 years, LAET and its predecessors have become firmly engrained in the community fabric of East Tennessee while serving a 26 county area which spans the eastern border of Tennessee. Offices throughout the service area are located in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Knoxville, Johnson City, Maryville, and Morristown. LAET's longtime executive director David R. Yoder retires on December 31, 2015.

## About the Position

The next Executive Director will lead a strong LAET with an overarching compassion for clients, an effective and successful advocacy staff, a solid management team, a dedicated Board, community good will, a budget surplus and a supportive network of partners throughout Tennessee. LAET's challenges include a large service area consisting of three diverse population centers, each surrounded by rural communities, the continuing integration of what once were three separate legal aid organizations, and the need for increased private funding in the face of decreased federal funding.

High Priority Roles and Responsibilities for the New Executive Director:

- To serve as the public face of LAET and to provide leadership in local, state and national legal aid networks, client and social services organizations, and the private bar.
- To provide staff leadership to support, strengthen and focus the production of high quality work for maximum impact upon clients.
- To lead and inspire increased support for civil legal aid.
- To grow and diversify funding.
- To preserve and grow community collaborations supporting pro bono, family justice, medical-legal, technology-based and other services for eligible clients.
- Qualifications of the New Executive Director:
  - JD and state law license required; if license is not Tennessee license, successful applicant will be required to obtain Tennessee license in a time frame to be set by the Board of Directors.
  - Passion for the mission of LAET.
  - Demonstrated commitment to advocacy in support of the legal rights of eligible clients.
  - Demonstrated management experience involving staff supervision, financial oversight, reporting, and budget development.
  - Experience in compliance with grant, contract and legal requirements a plus.
  - Excellent leadership and communication skills, a positive leadership style and big picture vision.
  - Enthusiasm for developing relationships and for resource development and fundraising.
  - Commitment to supporting diversity in the workplace.

- Commitment to the use of technology to improve and extend services.
- Experience and skill in communicating with an active board of directors.
- Willingness to travel throughout a diverse service area.
- Management of a multi-million dollar, multi-office organization a plus.
- Experience as a practicing attorney preferred.

## About Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET)

LAET completed 6,592 cases in 2014, benefiting more than 13, 236 individuals. Legal services ranged from gaining orders of protection for victims of domestic violence to preventing families from becoming homeless. The efforts of LAET in 2014 provided thousands of low income families a chance to survive and at the same time generated more than \$26 million in community economic benefits throughout the LAET service area. LAET provides civil legal services ranging from information and advice to individual case handling, complex litigation and appellate advocacy on behalf of low income persons in the 26 East Tennessee counties. Substantive areas of work include family law, domestic violence, landlord- tenant, housing

## Application Process

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To receive full consideration, please submit application materials by September 11, 2015. Please include a letter expressing in detail your interest in the position, your qualifications, and what you hope to contribute to the organization's future; a current resume; and the names and contact information for three professional references.

Materials should be emailed to [ppap@m-i-e.org](mailto:ppap@m-i-e.org) in Microsoft Word format.

LAET is being assisted in the search by Patricia Pap, Executive Director, Management Information Exchange, 99 Chauncy St., Suite 716, Boston, MA 02111, 617-556-0288, [ppap@m-i-e.org](mailto:ppap@m-i-e.org), [www.mielegalaid.org](http://www.mielegalaid.org). Candidates with questions about the position or process are encouraged to contact Ms. Pap.

LAET expects to make a hiring decision in December 2015 and to have the successful candidate join the organization in early 2016.

LAET is an equal opportunity employer and encourages candidates with disabilities, women, persons of color and others who represent distinct linguistic or cultural communities to apply. discrimination, foreclosure defense and prevention, consumer/debtor-creditor law, automobile issues, federal income tax assistance, elder law, public benefits, medical-legal and community economic development. Important in this effort to serve the community are LAET's Pro Bono Projects. The Projects include attorneys from local law firms, solo practitioners, paralegals, law students, paralegal students, independent mediators and others. Pro bono opportunities are varied and include participation in clinics including "the Saturday Bar," advice clinics, brief services and self-help clinics, in the areas of domestic violence, divorce, eviction prevention, advance directives, and debt-relief educational clinics. Pro bono volunteers also assist in conducting client intake at LAET branch offices.

LAET provides information on a wide variety of law related topics to low income groups, nonprofit organizations and others in the community through its Speakers Bureau, which provides information pamphlet displays in court houses across East Tennessee. Program funding is obtained from approximately 40 diverse sources. Those sources include the federal Legal Services Corporation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Justice, Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts (filing fees, traffic tickets, and a surcharge on bail bonds), Tennessee Department of Human Services, Tennessee Department of

Children's Services, Tennessee Commission on Aging, and Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice programs, as well as several community United Way organizations, private foundations, corporations, individual donors and proceeds from special events.

LAET has an annual budget of approximately \$4 million. It employs 51 staff members, including 24 attorneys, 12 paralegals, 11 support staff and 4 management staff.

The present day LAET is the result of the January 2002 merger of Legal Services of Upper East Tennessee and the Knoxville Legal Aid Society. At this same time, LAET assumed the service area formerly covered by LSC grantee Southeast Tennessee Legal Services. The present day LAET service area includes the cities of Knoxville, Chattanooga and the Tri-Cities of East Tennessee (Bristol, Kingsport and Johnson City) as well as their surrounding rural areas which include Appalachian mountain country and the Sequatchie Valley.

The organization is divided into three geographic regions for administrative and management purposes: the Central Region (served by the Knoxville and Maryville offices), the Southern Region (served by the Chattanooga and Cleveland offices), and the Northern Region (served by the Johnson City and Morristown offices). The executive director and administrative staff are located in the Knoxville office.

LAET has a 24 member board that meets quarterly. The board is comprised of individuals representative of the diverse geographic areas and income populations which exist throughout LAET's expansive service area.

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