Robin Hood Project — Staff Attorney

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc. (AFC) seeks an attorney to represent and advise families fighting for their children’s education. This attorney will join AFC’s Robin Hood Project to provide direct representation, technical assistance and community outreach/training. The Robin Hood Project partners with roughly 20 other Robin Hood-funded organizations (such as domestic violence shelters, hospitals, tutoring agencies, and social service providers) to help their staff assist clients who are struggling with education-related issues, including problems relating to literacy, learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, English-language learner (ELL) supports, and inappropriate school services, supports, and placements. The Project, which also includes another staff attorney, an advocate, and a project director, works directly with families served by these organizations, providing legal representation and advocacy. Legal representation for families consists primarily of special education hearings and conferences pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Additionally, the Project builds the capacity of these organizations through training and technical assistance so they can better address the educational needs of current and future clients. This attorney will use the Project’s integrated strategies to advocate for the educational needs of students involved with the various partner agencies and assist agency staff in supporting the educational needs of their clients.

Working in partnership with New York City’s most disadvantaged families to secure quality public education services, AFC is a not-for-profit social justice organization that enforces civil rights law. AFC works on behalf of children and youth who are at greatest risk of academic failure due to poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, homelessness, immigration status/limited English proficiency, or involvement in the child welfare or juvenile/criminal justice systems. We use uniquely integrated strategies to advance systemic reform, empower families and communities, and advocate for the educational rights of individual students.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Providing legal representation and advocacy on behalf of families experiencing school-related difficulties such as inappropriate special education placements and services, enrollment issues, or suspensions. This may include, for example, conducting client interviews, helping clients assess their options and goals, advocating for students at special education meetings or suspension hearings, requesting and interpreting evaluations, or representing clients at impartial administrative hearings related to special education under IDEA.

- Providing trainings and workshops to parents and staff at partnering agencies on a variety of education-related topics.
• Providing on-going technical assistance to staff at partnering agencies with the aim of building the capacity of these organizations to better address students’ educational issues.
• Serving as a liaison to partner organizations, helping to identify shared goals, and fielding inquiries and concerns.
• Tracking and recording project statistics using Salesforce database and preparing data for grant reports.

Qualifications:
• J.D. degree required.
• Fluency in Spanish is strongly preferred.
• Experience in education advocacy or a related field is strongly preferred.
• Knowledge of relevant education laws or practices is strongly preferred.
• Strength in oral and written communication skills.
• Ability to identify, analyze and creatively resolve layered and complex problems.
• Ability to set priorities, meet deadlines, and work both independently and as a member of a team.
• Ability to negotiate effectively in both adversarial and collaborative contexts.
• Commitment and ability to empower the families that are the focus of AFC’s mission.
• Experience presenting to groups is preferred.

How to apply:
Please send an email with “Robin Hood Staff Attorney” in the subject line with a resume and cover letter to rhstaffattorney@advocatesforchildren.org. Candidates should highlight any personal or professional experience that demonstrates their connection to the populations that AFC serves.

Only candidates being scheduled for interviews will be contacted.* The position is available immediately, and resumes will be considered on a rolling basis. For more information on AFC, see www.advocatesforchildren.org.

Salary:
Salary is commensurate with experience.

AFC is an affirmative action employer that actively encourages applications from a broad spectrum of people, including people of color, with disabilities, and of diverse religions, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

*No phone calls or messages, please.