

ATTORNEY STAFF COMPENSATION & BENEFITS PLAN

PURPOSE: To describe the attorney staff compensation and benefit plan adopted by the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. The objectives of the plan are:

- To provide compensation and benefits that will enhance our ability to recruit and retain staff who will provide the highest possible level of service to our clients;
- To offer compensation and benefits that equal or exceed those offered by peer legal services organizations in the District of Columbia;
- To establish a staffing structure of progressively more responsible positions, each with an established range of salaries, so that staff will have a predictable opportunity to obtain higher levels of compensation based on increasing experience and demonstrated performance.

POLICY: There are four staff categories covered by this policy: (1) Staff Attorney/Fellow; (2) Senior Staff Attorney/Project Manager; (3) Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney; and (4) Supervising Attorney/ Managing Attorney/Project Director. These positions have the following minimum qualifications:

Staff Attorney/Fellow:¹ Staff Attorneys/Fellows will be expected to be contributing members of the Unit to which they are assigned; handle an individual caseload within that Unit; conduct intakes; supervise interns and/or manage intern hiring; and, where appropriate, engage in law reform, policy advocacy, and/or systemic litigation. All Staff Attorneys/Fellows must be members of the District of Columbia Bar, be eligible to waive in, or, for a new attorney, be in the process of applying for membership. In addition, all Staff Attorneys/Fellows must have the following characteristics: ability to relate to the Legal Aid client community; commitment to the mission of Legal Aid; and strong legal, communication, and organizational skills.²

¹ Certain fellowships have specific requirements as to salaries and benefits that are separate and apart from this policy.

² New attorneys, until admitted and/or eligible to practice in the District of Columbia, will be compensated at the “pre-bar” range of the scale. In addition, new attorney hires with prior legal experience will generally receive one year of credit on the compensation scale for each year of prior legal experience, capped at ten years. Rare exceptions providing for more than ten years of credit are permitted at the discretion of the Executive Director and a Legal Director, particularly for those with significant previous directly relevant public interest experience.

Upon adoption of this policy, Legal Aid will conduct a salary review for all attorneys covered by this compensation and benefits plan to determine whether they are entitled to a “catch-up” adjustment on the

Senior Staff Attorney: To be eligible for Senior Staff Attorney, an attorney must meet Staff Attorney/Fellow qualifications and have been a practicing attorney for at least five years.³ The attorney's supervisor(s) must also determine that the attorney is prepared to assume some or all of the additional responsibilities of a Senior Staff Attorney. A Senior Staff Attorney is expected to perform all the duties of a Staff Attorney/Fellow. In addition, a Senior Staff Attorney is expected to handle increasingly complex matters, and, when requested, help mentor, train, or co-counsel cases with less experienced attorneys, loaned associates, and fellows, supervise intake, engage in law reform efforts, and play a leadership role within Legal Aid and the broader legal services community. Depending on the needs of the organization and the skills and experience of the individual attorney, a Senior Staff Attorney may also assist in supervising loaned associates, fellows, and legal assistants, and, from time-to-time undertake organizational functions (e.g., serve on a hiring committee, help develop fellowship or grant proposals, work on training sessions), as needed. To become a Senior Staff Attorney, an attorney must be nominated by a Supervising Attorney, Managing Attorney, or Project Director and approved by the Executive Director and a Legal Director.

Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney: Depending on the needs of the organization, some Senior Staff Attorneys may be asked to assume primary supervisory responsibility for one or more attorneys or other full-time non-attorney employees. Those responsibilities include but are not limited to: hiring, the full-time day-to-day supervision of staff, the evaluation of staff performance, and administrative supervision include the review and approval of time sheets and leave requests. In those circumstances, and upon approval by the Executive Director, in consultation with a Legal Director, a Senior Staff Attorney may be designated as a Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney. To be eligible for Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney, an attorney must meet Senior Staff Attorney qualifications and their supervisor(s) must also determine that they are prepared to assume the additional supervision responsibilities of this position. A Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney is not

salary scale, with full credit given for any prior legal experience that was not recognized at the time of hire and a total credit for prior legal experience generally capped at ten years. This adjustment is prospective only and will be effective January 1, 2021.

³ Although Legal Aid provides credit for prior legal experience in determining an attorney's starting compensation based on Legal Aid's salary scale (see footnote 2), the determination of an attorney's eligibility for consideration for Senior Staff Attorney is made separately. Legal Aid believes that the most relevant experience for the latter determination is time working at Legal Aid. Therefore, as a general matter, new attorneys who begin their careers at Legal Aid will be first eligible for consideration for Senior Staff Attorney after working for five years at Legal Aid. Attorneys who come to Legal Aid with prior legal experience will be first eligible for consideration after a total of six years of legal experience, at least three of which are at Legal Aid in the capacity of a Staff Attorney/Fellow. Exceptions for those working fewer than three years at Legal Aid are permitted at the discretion of the Executive Director and a Legal Director (and with the support of a Supervising Attorney, Managing Attorney, or Project Director), particularly for individuals with significant previous directly relevant public interest experience or for individuals who are asked to take on additional functions that might be expected of a Senior Staff Attorney.

a full-time supervisor, and will maintain a proportionally reduced workload that includes the other functions of a Senior Staff Attorney.

Project Manager: To be eligible for Project Manager, an attorney must meet Senior Staff Attorney qualifications and have been elevated to the position of Senior Staff Attorney prior to, or concurrently with, the assumption of the Project Manager role. In most cases, the attorney will hold both titles. A Project Manager is expected to perform a reduced number of the duties of a Senior Staff Attorney in addition to devoting a portion of their time to taking a leadership role in managing a project or program, under the supervision of a Supervising Attorney or Project Director. Project Managers generally will not be primarily responsible for supervising staff, with the exception of interns, fellows, and loaned associates. The attorney's supervisor(s) must also determine that the attorney is prepared to assume some or all of the additional responsibilities of a Project Manager.

Project Director: To be eligible for Project Director, an attorney must meet all of the Supervising or Managing Attorney qualifications and be prepared to assume the additional responsibilities of a Project Director. Each Project Director is responsible for taking a leadership and management role in setting the direction of and managing a project or program and, where appropriate, supervising others working on the project or program. Project Directors will participate in Supervisor Meetings even if they are not supervising attorneys within their projects. Depending on the demands of the particular project, some Project Directors will also be Supervising Attorneys for substantive units, whereas others will manage their respective projects fulltime. Currently, Legal Aid has fulltime Project Directors for the projects listed below.

- *The Director of the Barbara McDowell Appellate Advocacy Project* is responsible for taking a leadership role in developing Legal Aid's law reform docket in the District's appellate courts. The Director of the Appellate Advocacy Project is expected to help develop cases at the trial level that may present law reform issues; monitor the docket of the Court of Appeals for appellate opportunities; coordinate the work of volunteer attorneys; coordinate the development of issues and the filing of briefs with other legal services providers; and act as a resource to anti-poverty advocates with cases in the Court of Appeals. In addition, the Director of the Appellate Advocacy Project must have the following characteristics: ability to relate to the Legal Aid client community; commitment to the mission of Legal Aid; and strong legal, leadership, communication, and organizational skills.
- *The Director of the Policy Advocacy Project* is responsible for taking a leadership role in developing Legal Aid's law reform agenda in the D.C. Council and with D.C. agencies. The Director of the Policy Advocacy Project is expected to coordinate with Legal Aid's other practice area leaders to establish Legal Aid's policy advocacy priorities; prepare and coordinate the preparation of written and oral testimony to the D.C. Council on policies affecting Legal Aid's client community; work in collaboration with other D.C. legal services providers and other advocates on coalition advocacy projects; strategically engage clients, former clients, and the client community in policy advocacy; develop and maintain strong relationships with D.C. Councilmembers and their staff; and coordinate Legal Aid's

participation in non-litigation advocacy campaigns for systemic change. In addition, the Director of the Policy Advocacy Project must have the following characteristics: ability to relate to the Legal Aid client community; commitment to the mission of Legal Aid; and strong legal, leadership, communication, and organizational skills.

- *The Director of the Immigration Project* is responsible for developing Legal Aid’s policy and litigation priorities to advance immigrants’ rights in D.C. The Director of the Immigration Project is expected to coordinate with Legal Aid’s other practice area leaders to identify policy advocacy priorities; prepare and coordinate testimony and regulatory comments affecting Legal Aid’s immigrant client community; work in collaboration with other D.C. legal services providers and advocates on coalition advocacy projects; and provide internal guidance on the particularized needs of immigrant clients and help lead efforts to regularize cultural competence in Legal Aid’s immigrant client services. In addition, the Director of the Immigration Project must have the following characteristics: ability to relate to the Legal Aid client community; commitment to the mission of Legal Aid; and strong legal, leadership, communication, and organizational skills.

Supervising or Managing Attorney: To be eligible for Supervising or Managing Attorney, an attorney must meet the Senior or Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney qualifications, plus have a minimum of seven years of experience in legal services, public defense, or other relevant legal work. This requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Executive Director in consultation with a Legal Director. A Supervising or Managing Attorney is expected either to be: (1) responsible for the leadership and direction of a substantive law practice unit, as well as the direct supervision of 2-5 attorneys (including Staff or Senior or Supervisory Senior Staff Attorneys, and, possibly Fellows, loaned associates and/or non-attorney staff) within the unit, or (2) responsible for the leadership and direction of one or more legal programs, such as Legal Aid’s Pro Bono and/or Intake Programs. A Supervising or Managing Attorney may also be expected to handle a modest individual caseload, provide management assistance, and conduct and/or supervise intakes.

The Board of Trustees has established the following compensation scale.

**Attorney Annual Salary Ranges and Steps
Proposed Effective 1/1/2024**

Step	Staff Attorney	Senior Staff Attorney and/or Project Manager	Supervisory Senior Staff Attorney	Supervising Attorney, Project Director, and/or Managing Attorney
0 Pre-Bar	60,520			
0	62,974			
1	65,427			
2	67,881			
3	70,334			
4	72,788	80,446	83,683	
5	78,825	83,016	86,253	96,964
6	81,396	85,588	88,825	99,741
7	83,965	88,157	91,394	102,515
8	86,536	90,728	93,965	105,292
9	89,106	93,299	96,536	108,069
10	91,676	95,868	99,105	110,844
11	94,246	98,439	101,676	113,621
12	96,817	101,009	104,246	116,396
13	99,388	103,579	106,816	119,172
14	101,958	106,150	109,387	121,949
15	104,529	108,721	111,957	124,725
16	107,098	111,292	114,529	127,501
17	109,669	113,861	117,098	130,276
18	112,240	116,432	119,669	133,053
19	114,809	119,002	122,239	135,828
20	117,380	121,572	124,809	138,604
21	119,950	124,143	127,380	141,381
22	122,521	126,713	129,950	144,157
23	125,091	129,283	132,520	146,932
24	127,662	131,854	135,090	149,708
25	130,232	134,425	137,662	152,485
26	132,802	136,995	140,232	155,261
27	135,373	139,565	142,802	158,036
28	137,942	142,136	145,373	160,813
29	140,513	144,705	147,942	163,588
30	143,084	147,276	150,513	166,365
31		149,847	153,084	169,141
32		152,417	155,654	171,917
33		154,989	158,226	174,694
34		157,559	160,796	177,470
35		160,130	163,367	180,247

In order to recognize longevity and commitment to Legal Aid, all staff members covered by this policy will receive an additional step increase on the next full pay period following the third and tenth anniversary of the staff member's employment at Legal Aid. There is also a larger than ordinary compensation increase for Staff Attorneys between steps 4 and 5 in recognition of level of legal experience as set forth on the above scale.

The Board will review the salary ranges on an annual basis in connection with adoption of the fiscal year budget. Taking into account budgetary constraints, market conditions, and changes in the cost of living, the Board will determine whether cost of living or other adjustments should be made to the ranges. On an annual basis, the Board will endeavor to raise the entire scale by the Consumer Price Index for the DMV region, as set by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Board, taking into account budgetary constraints and other circumstances, may from time to time approve payment of a bonus to staff.

In addition, Legal Aid offers all staff the following benefits:

- Health insurance.
- Long-term disability insurance.
- Participation in a highly portable, 401(k) retirement plan affording each staff member the opportunity to shelter pre-tax income in a variety of investment options. A post tax Roth option is also available.
- Discretionary employer retirement match, the amount of which is determined annually by the Board (generally set at 3%). The employer match is subject to a 25% per year vesting schedule with employee being fully vested in employer funding after four years.
- Participation in a flexible benefits ("cafeteria") plan affording each attorney the opportunity to set aside pre-tax income for health and dependent care costs.
- Paid annual leave in accordance with Legal Aid's Personnel Handbook.
- 15 days of paid sick leave per year.
- 3 days of paid personal leave per year.
- Employee paid pre-tax MetroCheck.