



## **Job Announcement**

### **Case Advocate for the Peer Workforce Navigator Project**

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#### **Position Summary:**

Maine Equal Justice (MEJ) has an immediate opening for a passionate, mission-driven individual for a full-time Case Advocate position for the exciting Peer Workforce Navigator Project. This position will:

- Work with community-based Navigators and individuals identified by Navigators to resolve issues with unemployment cases or other public benefits issues; including but not limited to assisting with departmental hearings, interpreting communications, and identifying and troubleshooting systemic incidents.
- Work directly with community members referred by Navigators and who are in need of technical assistance and legal aid to support their successful connection to critical benefits and resources.
- Manage legal aid referrals for workforce related incidents, including working directly with MEJ's Legal Services team and other statewide pro-bono providers.
- Work with PWN Director, Policy Advocate, and Navigators to identify systemic incidents and corresponding systemic solutions; similarly to identify individuals experiencing systemic barriers who may be willing to participate in advocacy or organizing efforts around these policy changes.

MEJ is a nonprofit civil legal aid and economic justice organization working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity in Maine. MEJ advocates for fair public policies in the legislature and with governmental agencies; provides direct legal services and representation through impact litigation; and partners with diverse communities and agencies through outreach, organizing, and education.

#### **Peer Workforce Navigator Project Overview**

Emerging during the pandemic, labor, community and immigrant organizations have been working together to help workers access unemployment insurance, other critical services and good quality jobs and apprenticeship programs. Through this hands on support, we are also uncovering systemic issues and barriers that can make it incredibly difficult, or even prevent, individuals from successfully accessing the resources they need, when they need them.

The Workforce Navigator project is a three-year pilot project that will end in the summer of 2025 that seeks to improve access to unemployment insurance and other resources/supports for workers seeking greater economic security. Peer workforce navigators are housed at labor, community-based, and immigrant-led organizations and are working together to connect people with good jobs, training opportunities, unemployment benefits, and support services while also working to identify and solve systemic barriers that prevent workers from gaining dignity and economic security. This project is building new infrastructure to assist workers, identify and solve systemic issues to strengthen programs, improve the ways in which the government connects with and serves people, and build worker and community power to advance systems-level change.

### **Representative Tasks:**

- Lead case meetings with the peer workforce navigators.
- Support clinics statewide and assist community members needing legal support to available legal services. Receives and evaluates issues and complaints raised by community members and determines method of response.
- Support Navigators with case referrals for unemployment insurance cases with organizational systems that support consistent follow through and follow up.
- Consistently enters and maintains accurate client data in PWN database.
- Help identify legal issues when they arise (both individual and systemic), provide case support and pursue administrative representation and litigation as needed on behalf of workers, drawing on pro bono support from the private bar.
- Provide assistance to Navigators and community members in reviewing unemployment decision letters and identifying next steps, as needed, including support that may be required in preparation for fact-findings with the Maine Department of Labor.
- Assist in legal research, as available, in order to support efforts to engage in rulemaking that makes government systems more accessible and available.
- Help coordinate and communicate on cases and clinic activities across the PWN project team.
- Train and support volunteer Navigators on unemployment insurance.
- Identify needs for additional client education and info sheets that can address commonly misunderstood and inaccessible government policies and practices and assist with drafting and proofing these info sheets.
- Attend Bureau of Unemployment Compensation and Bureau of Employment Services meetings

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

- Commitment to and clear analysis of economic and racial justice and the ability to incorporate that analysis into their work.
- Ability to build a strong knowledge base and expertise in the area of unemployment insurance law and policy.
- Knowledge of additional programs and resources throughout the state that provide services or benefits to low-income people.

- Ability to evaluate a community members' issues and concerns (sometimes beyond what they indicate that they are calling about) and make appropriate referrals.
- Strong problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
- Strong organizational skills to manage competing priorities and deadlines.
- Ability to work in a collaborative, rapid-paced environment.
- Ability to work sensitively with individuals/families with low income.
- Ability to work with a variety of individuals in coalition and as a team.
- Knowledge of computer programs including Microsoft Office and G-Suite. Salesforce experience helpful but not required.

**Minimum qualifications:** A four (4) year combination of education, training, and experience in working on issues that affect low-income people, including direct client contact. Knowledge and experience of the legal system and substantive and procedural law. Bachelor's degree and knowledge of a spoken language in addition to English preferred but not required. Law degree preferred but not required.

**Special Requirements:** None.

**Salary and Benefits:** Salary range of \$58,000-\$72,000 based on experience and educational background. Health and dental insurance are provided, with premiums and deductibles mostly covered by employer. MEJ offers retirement accounts with an annual employer contribution, generous vacation time (five weeks vacation in first year of employment), generous sick time, and 14 paid holidays per year.

**To apply:** Submit a letter of interest and a resume addressed to Robyn Merrill, Executive Director, and emailed to [admin@mejp.org](mailto:admin@mejp.org) (PDF's preferred). Applications will be accepted until **November 8, 2023**. More information about Maine Equal Justice can be found at [www.MaineEqualJustice.org](http://www.MaineEqualJustice.org). We encourage people of color, members of the LGBTQ community, and those with lived experience of poverty to apply. Maine Equal Justice is an Equal Opportunity Employer.