



Legal Aid of Nebraska Seeks an Executive Director

Legal Aid of Nebraska (LAN), the largest non-profit law firm providing free civil legal services in all 93 counties in Nebraska, seeks a visionary and collaborative individual to serve as its next executive director.

LAN's mission is to promote justice, dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn. For nearly 60 years, LAN has been the primary provider of civil legal services to low-income and vulnerable Nebraskans, delivering legal services in its four legal priority areas: Children & Families, Debt & Finance, Housing, and Income & Benefits through its substantive units, programs and projects, and its Access & Intake unit. Legal Aid of Nebraska has a staff of approximately 100, including 50 attorneys located in seven offices across the state.

The next Executive Director will join LAN at a time of organizational stability, passionate advocacy, and positive relationships with community partners and those involved in the justice community. Focus areas for growth include serving a large geographic and mostly rural state, increasing involvement of the private bar in pro bono activities and financial giving, and optimizing branding and fundraising efforts. The Executive Director is anticipated to spend a significant portion of their time on fund development and networking.

Legal Aid of Nebraska's Executive Director will be responsible for:

- Providing visionary, strategic, collaborative leadership to accomplish LAN's mission and to improve the availability and quality of civil legal aid for low-income and vulnerable people in Nebraska;
- Safeguarding LAN's fiscal health, stability, integrity, and reputation through sound financial planning;
- Leading fund development activities that ensure the long-term sustainability of LAN through active leadership of a diversified resource development program focused on individual and law firm gifts, private donations, foundation grants, and government grants and contracts;
- Forming strong relationships with local funders and government officials;
- Implementing LAN's recently adopted strategic plan while overseeing ongoing planning and implementation efforts to ensure the continued thoughtful development of LAN's programs and policies;
- Successful management of an approximately \$11 million civil legal aid program in accordance with the policies and programmatic decisions of LAN's Board of Directors and the requirements of funders;
- Working with the Board, leadership team, and staff to review and develop policies to achieve adherence to organizational bylaws and inform program operations in order to fulfill LAN's mission;
- Engaging and inspiring staff members, board members, clients, and other stakeholders to understand and support the organizational mission, including its work to address poverty;

- Striving to enhance staff retention and engagement while developing a talent pipeline (succession planning) to replace long-tenured employees with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion;
- Hiring, supervising, evaluating, and meeting regularly with the senior leadership to provide direction, advice, and oversight as appropriate;
- Ensuring the continued provision of high-quality legal assistance, with an emphasis on excellence and innovation;
- Effectively advocating for the legal rights of low-income persons;
- Protecting and promoting LAN's culture of transparency, integrity, inclusiveness, and equity; including endorsing an atmosphere of openness and encouragement for clients, staff, board members and supporters;
- Serving as an effective ambassador to LAN's public and key stakeholders;
- Leading racial equity efforts in the areas of advocacy, community involvement, internal policies, board composition, and hiring;
- Finding resources that can help LAN to set vision and harness technology to improve access to justice and organizational efficiency;
- Liaising with state and local bar associations, courts, Nebraska's IOLTA Board, state and national access to justice entities, and organizations such as the American Bar Association, National Legal Aid and Defender Association, Legal Services Corporation, and other relevant entities as appropriate;
- Creating a path forward for staff, clients, and community post-pandemic.

Key qualities or qualifications of the successful candidate:

- Juris Doctor degree and admission to the Nebraska Bar, or the ability to obtain admission following employment, is preferred but not required;
- Exhibit outstanding communication skills orally and in writing with a range of audiences and stakeholders, including being a compelling speaker who is comfortable being the public face of the organization;
- Have a track record of success in fundraising and resource development and possess a desire to develop and expand the resources of LAN;
- Demonstrated skills as an effective relationship builder and collaborator in networks such as agencies, judiciary, elected officials, grantees, local bar associations, social service organizations, present and potential funders, the public at large, and client communities;
- Possess a proven ability to build new relationships while maintaining existing financial supporters;
- Significant management experience necessary to direct LAN's operations, manage staff, and oversee large budgets, with legal aid or nonprofit experience preferred;
- Knowledge of nonprofit budgeting, financial functions, grant reporting, and compliance;
- Broad and deep public interest legal experience across a range of issues;
- Experience working productively with an engaged board of directors;
- Ability to manage wide-ranging responsibilities and to assist others in managing their responsibilities in a demanding environment;
- A leader who is organized, energetic, detail-oriented, able to delegate, decisive, personable, persuasive, and interested in all aspects of the position;
- Possess personal attributes of professionalism, positivity, respect for others, good active listening skills, problem-solving talents, and the ability to motivate others;
- Has experience building a strong team environment;

- Will support and encourage professional development of staff;
- Ability to inspire the trust and confidence of the staff, board members, client communities, and other stakeholders and allies;
- Experience working effectively with multiple organizations and individuals with diverse perspectives;
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion activities;
- Experience with data-driven approaches and relevant technology and its application to effective communication and efficient delivery of services;
- Ability to bring vision, integrity, courage, decisiveness, intelligence, creativity, energy, humor, and compassion to the challenges of this exciting, important, and demanding position; and
- Be willing and able to travel to national and regional conferences and throughout the LAN service area, and have experience serving a mix of urban and rural populations.

Application process:

To receive consideration, candidates are asked to submit their applications by August 5, 2022. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter expressing why they are interested in the position, as well as what they believe they can contribute to the future of the organization and its client community. The letter should be accompanied by a current resume and the names and contact information of three professional and three personal references. Application materials should be submitted to search@legalaidofnebraska.org in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Applications will be held in confidence during the initial stages of the process.

The organizational contact for candidates with questions about position or process is Jen Gaughan, Interim Executive Director at jgaughan@legalaidofnebraska.org, and, the board of directors contact is Amy Van Horne, President of the Board of Directors, at search@legalaidofnebraska.org.

LAN intends to make a decision during September of 2022, and to have the successful candidate join the organization soon thereafter.

Salary depends on experience based on a competitive public-interest salary scale. Benefits include comprehensive health insurance and retirement plans.

About Legal Aid of Nebraska (LAN):

LAN's mission is to promote justice, dignity, hope, and self-sufficiency through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn. LAN is a statewide private nonprofit public interest law firm that, for nearly 60 years, provides free legal help in civil matters to individuals and families experiencing poverty and other vulnerable populations. LAN also works to raise awareness of its services and the rights and responsibilities of the population it services through outreach and education. Its litigation offices are location in Omaha, Lincoln, Scottsbluff, North Platte, Grand Island and Norfolk, with its Farm and Ranch Program located in Bancroft and its Administrative Offices located in Omaha.

LAN has the following priorities for its organizational work, including legal advocacy, assistance, outreach, and community education:

- Children & Families
- Debt and Finance

- Housing
- Income & Benefits

These are the areas in which clients are most likely to develop legal problems that they cannot address themselves. With experienced attorneys on staff, LAN works to ensure that clients do not lose their housing due to eviction and foreclosure and have access to and can maintain safe, stable and affordable housing; that their income and assets are protected and that they are not harassed by debt collectors or victimized by unfair debt collection practices; that they and their families are protected from abuse and neglect; and that they have access to healthcare and can receive the public benefits, and other forms of income support they need to maintain their financial stability.

LAN also has specialized programs to address the legal needs of Native Americans, agricultural workers, farmers and ranchers, veterans, seniors, survivors of domestic violence, persons who face legal barriers to re-entry due to past criminal offenses, and medical-legal partnerships.

LAN has an annual budget of approximately \$11 million. It receives funds from the Legal Services Corporation, as well as state, federal and private funding sources.

The Board of Directors:

The Board has twenty-one (21) members, including practicing attorneys as well as community representatives who financially qualify to receive LAN's assistance, from across the state.

Leadership Team:

The leadership team includes the Executive Director, Chief of Business Administration, Chief of Development and External Relations, Chief of Legal/Strategy, Directors of the Children & Families, Debt & Finance, Housing, Income & Benefits, and, Access & Intake Units, Centralized Intake Unit Managing Attorney, Director of Research and Evaluation, Director of Finance, and IT Director.

The Staff: LAN has a staff of 100 highly motivated employees, including 50 attorneys, who are dedicated to the principle of equal justice for all.

Read more about LAN's work at: <https://www.legalaidofnebraska.org>

LAN is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer committed to the value of workforce diversity. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, physical or mental disability, protected veterans, genetic information, or sexual orientation.