Staff Attorney

Full-Time | Hybrid | 35 hours

The Connecticut Veterans Legal Center (CVLC) is seeking a Staff Attorney to join its Veterans Affairs and Military Unit (VAMU) in the following capacities: (1) representing veterans in military records corrections or "discharge upgrade" claims before the Department of Defense, (2) representing veterans in VA Benefits cases, specifically recharacterizations of discharge administrative hearings in order to obtain VA Healthcare access and service-connected compensation and (3) pardon applications and hearings.

Each year, DoD denies service members an "honorable" discharge, often for inequitable or erroneous reasons, such as underlying PTSD manifesting in misconduct, or as the result of bias and discrimination. These discharges result in ineligibility for VA educational, medical, or disability benefits and make it harder for veterans to get civilian jobs. Veterans with less-than-fully honorable discharges face higher risks of suicide, homelessness, and other negative outcomes. This means we fail to care for and support some of our country's most wounded warriors when they need it most.

This is a full-time position with a hybrid remote work environment. The role offers a collaborative attorney the opportunity to take on significant responsibility within a growing organization and visibility within the larger legal aid community.

About CVLC:

We are a dynamic group of client-centered advocates. The results we get for our veterans are some of the best in legal aid, and we all play a part in making that happen. We are collegial and collaborative; we all pitch in as needed. Our teamwork is a hallmark of our organization. CVLC is the first legal aid program in the country to form a medical-legal partnership with the VA. This partnership integrates legal help into VA mental health, housing and addiction services. Our work occurs where veterans law intersects with economic and racial justice, human rights, and mental health.

Primary Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Discharge upgrades and military records corrections:** Represent veterans before Department of Defense administrative boards, with federal court review when appropriate.
- **VA benefits claims and appeals:** Handle disability compensation, character-of-discharge determinations affecting eligibility, VA debt, and related matters.

- **Pardon applications and representation:** Assess eligibility, gather supporting records, prepare pardon applications, and represent veterans at hearings as needed.
- **Hearings and court appeals:** Prepare submissions and represent clients before the Board of Veterans' Appeals and, when appropriate, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.
- **Case development and legal writing:** Interview clients, analyze military and medical records, gather evidence, develop case strategy, and draft applications and briefs.
- **Caseload management:** Manage matters across all practice areas, meet deadlines, maintain accurate records, and communicate regularly with clients.
- **Collaboration and volunteer support:** Coordinate with VA clinicians, community partners, and colleagues; train and assist volunteer attorneys.
- **Practice improvement and policy advocacy:** Improve procedures, contribute to the Veterans Inclusion Project, and share practice insights at trainings or conferences.

Qualifications for the Role:

- **You are admitted to the practice of law in Connecticut or another state**: The Staff Attorney should have experience representing clients as a licensed lawyer. Prior experience working in administrative law in front of a federal or state agency is not required.
- **You have a passion for justice:** The Staff Attorney will have a passion for social justice issues and an enthusiasm for helping people in need.
- **You like people:** The Staff Attorney will have to be comfortable having regular interactions over the phone and in-person with low-income and psychiatric need clients and helping them navigate the Veterans Affairs system.
- **You want to learn:** The Staff Attorney's success will be based on their being willing to learn and practice in multiple areas of the law.
- **You are flexible and comfortable with technology**: The Staff Attorney needs to be comfortable working in various locations and with different computer systems. The CVLC is a paperless office and needs an attorney that has the skill set to function independently in that environment.
- **You enjoy working on a team**: The Staff Attorney will need to work well with the VAMU team and also with the variety of clinicians that we partner with to help serve our clients. You will be one part of the medical-legal team helping find and create solutions for your clients.

Compensation:

Salary is assigned via a step scale based on years since bar passage. **Salary range is from $62,500 to $105,300.** We offer generous benefits, including health, dental, vision, and life insurance; a 403(b) retirement plan; paid time off and sick leave; and a family-friendly workplace.

To Apply:

Please submit a resume, cover letter, and 3–5-page legal writing sample to applicants@ctveteranslegal.org, with "Discharge Upgrade and VA Benefits Staff Attorney" in the subject line. A brief, motion, or legal memorandum excerpt is preferred. Identify your contribution and any substantive editing by others, and remove all confidential or identifying information.

Studies have shown that women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) individuals are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they meet every single one of the qualifications as described in a job description; despite the reality that applicants rarely ever meet 100% of the qualifications. We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive organization, and we are most interested in

finding the best candidate for the role. That candidate may be one who comes from a background less traditional to our field of work, and that's okay! We strongly encourage you to apply, even if you don't believe you meet every one of the qualifications described.