

Job Announcement: General Counsel and Director of Contract Management

TakeRoot Justice (TakeRoot), located in downtown NYC, seeks a full-time, experienced, and proactive General Counsel & Director of Contract Management to advise and oversee the organization and its grants portfolio from legal, operational and compliance perspectives and includes liaising and negotiating with government funding agencies. As TakeRoot is a freestanding non-profit organization as of July 1, 2019, the General Counsel will also develop strategies, structures and procedures to address potential legal issues.

This position will be an integral part of the Management Team and report to the Executive Director.

The ideal candidate will be a highly organized and self-motivated leader with experience in government contract compliance, strive towards democratic decision-making, and have a clear and demonstrated passion for social, racial and economic justice.

About the Organization

TakeRoot Justice was founded in 2001 as the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center (UJC) and provides legal, participatory research and policy support to strengthen the work of grassroots and community-based groups in New York City to dismantle racial, economic and social oppression. Now separate and independent of UJC, TakeRoot's budget has more than doubled in size in the past three years, mainly through a significant increase in government city and state funding.

TakeRoot employs a unique model of partnership with grassroots and community-based groups as our partners take the lead in determining the priorities and goals for our work and advance our understanding of justice. We believe in a theory of change where short-term and individual successes help build the capacity and power of our partners, who in turn can have longer-term impact on policies, laws and systems that affect their communities. TakeRoot itself strives to embody a flat organizational structure within the management team/union members dynamic.

TakeRoot recognizes the benefits of an organized workplace and collective bargaining in creating a democratic workplace and building a more just economy. The Corporation supports the rights of workers to choose whether to join a union, bargain collectively, and exercise these rights without reprisal. Staff at TakeRoot are represented for collective bargaining purposes by the National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW, Local 2230.

We believe our work has greater impact because it is done in connection with organizing, building power, and leadership development. Internally, all staff engage in a democratic process of decision-making to create and implement organization-wide resolutions. These decisions range from providing input on budgets to reimagining TakeRoot's organizational structure. To learn more about TakeRoot, visit takerootjustice.org.

Responsibilities

1. Ensure and maintain compliance of the organization under State and Federal Not-for-Profit Laws.
2. Review and negotiate all agreement terms, such as NYC subcontract agreements, vendor agreements, etc.
3. Directly supervise members of the Resource Management Team, which consists of Grant Managers and Coalition Coordinators. The team needs supervision assistance with a) developing processes and structures for contract management, b) providing guidance on contract duties, c) professional development for team members as well as assistance in developing work plans (as needed), etc.
4. Serve on the Management Team and work closely with Practice Area supervisors and operational team managers to address organization-wide strategy, sustainability partnerships, staff needs and operations.
5. Provide legal advice to staff on contracts and legal matters for the organization, including those related to employment and labor law, contracts and grants, tax matters, defamation, and liability and insurance matters.
6. Review and assess grant requirements and modifications.
7. Ensure and maintain lobbying compliance under state, federal and city law as well as political activities and campaign compliance.
8. Create processes to ensure compliance with New York City Council funding guidelines, contract budget proposals, government RFP submissions, renewals, negotiations, and any contract modifications.
9. In collaboration with staff, develop, implement, and advise on the creation of policies, procedures, systems, Board resolutions, bylaws and other legal documents to minimize risk.
10. Create and maintain best practices by monitoring all updates to New York City, New York State, and federal requirements to ensure continual government and contract compliance, especially in preparation of annual audits and any risk assessments to be performed by potential funders.
11. Train and counsel staff on laws, regulations, and policies related to matters of legal relevance for colleagues.
12. Develop and maintain systems for ethics compliance for the legal practitioners, including conflict checking.
13. Review and update the language of all agreement templates for TakeRoot Justice, such as retainers, MOUs, etc.
14. Establish and maintain positive professional relationships with staff, partners, funders, UJC and auditors.
15. Manage outside counsel and identify and maintain relationships with pro-bono counsel on behalf of TakeRoot.

Qualifications/Skills

1. J.D. from an accredited law school, and admission to practice in New York State required
2. 6+ years of relevant experience required
3. 4+ years of government city and state grant management experience required, preferably Human Resource Administration (HRA)
4. Experience managing and supervising a diverse team with wide-ranging responsibilities and expertise
5. Non-profit experience strongly preferred, including experience with organizational compliance
6. Highly organized and detail-oriented, as required for strategic planning and implementation and organizational development
7. Experience working with unions from a management perspective preferred
8. Strong legal research and writing skills and demonstrated command over a range of legal topics
9. Strong interpersonal communication and conflict-management skills, including the ability to be diplomatic and have discretion in dealings with others
10. High degree of professional ethics and integrity
11. Excellent time-management skills, as required to effectively manage multiple projects in a deadline-driven environment and take on other projects and duties as required
12. Strong advocacy and experience with and/or commitment to grassroots efforts working towards social, economic and racial justice
13. Enthusiasm for working in a democratically run organization

Timeline, Benefits & Compensation

The anticipated start date for this position is January 2020.

An excellent benefits package is available, with generous vacation, personal, and sick time, along with industry-leading medical and dental coverage. TakeRoot's staff are on a fixed salary scale, and the salary for this position will be determined based on years of relevant experience in accordance with the scale.

TakeRoot Justice is an equal opportunity employer. TakeRoot encourages applications from people with diverse backgrounds, including women, people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, people from low-income backgrounds, and people with personal experience with the criminal justice system. We strongly encourage applications from people with lived experiences in the communities we serve.

Application Instructions

Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter by email to jobs@takerootjustice.org,
attn: Selena Lilly. The subject line of the email must include: "General Counsel/DCM".
Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled.