



Job Opening Announcement: Climate and Energy Program Staff Attorney

Reports to: Climate and Energy Program Director

Location: Helena, Montana; other WELC offices and remote locations will be considered.

Timeline: Position opened June 24, 2021; review of applications will begin August 16, 2021, and continue on a rolling basis thereafter until the position is filled.

ABOUT THE WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

The Western Environmental Law Center (WELC) is a leading nonprofit public interest environmental law firm. We envision a thriving, resilient Western U.S., abundant with protected public lands and wildlife, powered by renewable energy, defended by communities rooted in an ethic of conservation, and committed to equity, inclusion, and justice. We achieve this vision with steady, strategic, and bold legal advocacy that turns the wheels of power at all levels of government. WELC seeks a Wildlands and Wildlife Program Staff Attorney to join our team and advance our mission. We strongly encourage people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ+ applicants to apply.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Climate and Energy Program Staff Attorney is an exempt, full-time position. The central focus of this position is strategic, legal, and policy advocacy centered on the confluence of the climate crisis with the federal public lands fossil fuels program. The position's responsibilities will be allocated among the following core areas:

- Litigation and administrative engagement pertaining to federal public lands fossil fuel planning, leasing, infrastructure, and drilling approvals (0.6 FTE).
- Engagement in federal climate, fossil fuels, public lands, and energy transition legislation, rulemaking, and policymaking (0.3 FTE).
- Advocacy to link and amplify federal fossil fuels advocacy with Tribal, state, and community-based climate, fossil fuels, and energy transition action (0.1 FTE).

The Staff Attorney, in working in these areas, will advance equity, inclusion, and justice imperatives identified in cooperation with partners and allies, including frontline and energy-dependent communities. While centered on federal advocacy, the Staff Attorney will also coordinate with WELC's state-level advocacy. Given the dynamic moment we find ourselves in, this position's focus and time allocations will necessarily evolve in response to changing political, scientific, social, and economic circumstances. Further, and as with all WELC positions, this position is flexibly designed to accommodate a successful candidate's distinctive skills, experiences, and interests to further and complement WELC's strategic climate focus.

In advancing this work, the Staff Attorney will provide a full range of legal services to clients, including strategic advice, litigation, policy and administrative advocacy, and collaboration. The Staff Attorney will also stay apprised of relevant law, policy, social, and scientific developments. In all endeavors, the Staff Attorney will be responsible for developing and maintaining strong, trusting, and effective relationships with clients, partners, allies, and the full range of stakeholders involved in the Staff Attorney's docket.

The Staff Attorney will be encouraged and supported to identify and advance opportunities to shape WELC's climate and energy program, to share perspectives internally and externally, and to be a leader in their field and within their scope of work. The Staff Attorney will also have the opportunity to contribute to organization-wide strategic planning and action to expand and deepen our commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice.

The Staff Attorney will support and coordinate with WELC leadership, development, communications, and finance staff to further the organization's mission, including through advocacy updates, occasional assistance with fundraising activities, and representation of WELC in public and private settings, including conferences, partnerships, and meetings with foundation staff, private donors, and government decision-makers. Given the importance of leveraging legal advocacy in service of advancing a climate-centered public discourse, engagement in communications strategies with members of the media, public, elected officials, and others about WELC and matters relevant to the Staff Attorney's docket will prove essential.

The Staff Attorney is a normal 40-hour week position based out of an existing WELC office or a remote home office, primarily working during Monday to Friday business hours, though some night and weekend hours may be required depending on case needs. Limited travel is required, including overnight and weekend travel. The position also involves standard office physical demands. WELC will provide all reasonable accommodations to the extent possible or required pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

QUALIFICATIONS

We are keenly interested in considering a range of applicants with diverse lived experiences who approach the world with kindness, imagination, and vision. We will happily consider applicants who offer, with the exception of the first two qualifications set forth below, an equivalent or alternative set of qualifications to fulfill this position's responsibilities.

- Law degree from an accredited law school.
- Admission to and good standing with a U.S. state bar or willingness to obtain membership to a U.S. state bar where the attorney is located at the earliest opportunity.
- Lived experience within or past working/organizing experience in partnership with frontline or energy-dependent communities.
- Excellent research, writing, and oral advocacy skills.
- At least three years of litigation, administrative, or other legal experience. Relevant experience obtained prior to the applicant's law degree will also be considered.
- Experience with and knowledge of federal climate, fossil fuels, and public lands issues. A science degree or is not required, but an interest in and understanding of science and its interplay with climate, fossil fuels, public lands, and communities is important.

- Ability and willingness to act as a lead attorney on cases and projects and use a complete set of legal advocacy tools including litigation, policy and administrative advocacy, and collaboration.
- A commitment to conceptualizing and implementing legal strategies that further equity, inclusion, and justice, including through the just treatment and meaningful involvement of clients, partners, and front-line community groups and individuals.
- Dynamic and empathetic skills to foster relationships with partners, clients, agencies, and communities. Demonstrated ability to work in complex, potentially high-conflict, multi-dimensional arenas including engagement with a broad array of organizations and interests.
- Ability to work independently and proactively, including a willingness to be flexible and adaptive when needed.
- Capacity to constructively work through challenging professional situations in a team environment.
- Highly organized and intellectually curious.
- Demonstrated commitment to WELC's mission and strategies and the public interest as well as a love for the land, waters, wildlife, and communities of the Western U.S.

BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION

Western Environmental Law Center is an equal opportunity employer. We offer a flexible, friendly, team-based environment with immediate opportunities to shape organizational strategies, competitive salaries (\$64,000 - \$100,000 for this position, depending on experience and location), and an excellent benefits package, including health, vision, dental, life, and disability coverage (with WELC paying 100% of an employee's premiums), a 401(k) retirement plan with a 4% WELC match, 22 days combined of paid annual vacation and personal leave on top of 12 days of paid holiday leave, paid sick leave, and a paid long-term leave policy (3 months family/sabbatical leave accrued for every 5 years of employment).

TO APPLY

We strongly encourage people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ+ applicants to apply. Please email the following as PDF attachments by August 15, 2021 to jobs@westernlaw.org:

- 1-2 page cover letter addressed to Kyle Tisdell, Climate and Energy Program Director;
- Resume;
- 3-5 professional references; and
- 1-2 writing samples (preferably under 10 pages each) with at least 1 writing sample involving a legal memorandum, brief, or filing. An additional, non-legal writing sample is also welcomed to illustrate the candidate's background, views, or ideas.

Cover letters should communicate the applicant's commitment to WELC's mission and advocacy and their motivation to work in this position and public interest law generally. Applicants are strongly encouraged to tell us who they are as a human being, why they care about this work, and why they are interested in this position.

For more information about WELC, please visit www.westernlaw.org