Senior Attorney - Impact Litigation Unit
Atlanta, USA
$100,000 – $115,000 annually, plus benefits

Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR), a leading force challenging unconstitutional practices of the criminal legal system through federal and state litigation in Alabama and Georgia, is seeking nominations and applications for a Senior Attorney to join the Impact Litigation Unit (ILU).

Reporting to the Director of the ILU, this new Senior Attorney will work cases in the Impact Litigation Unit. This work includes the supervision of lawyers and investigators, collaboration with colleagues in other units, and public communication and advocacy. They will also manage all aspects of their class action case load, including: drafting complaints, briefs, litigation correspondence, and discovery documents; taking depositions; preparing for and conducting evidentiary hearings; conducting settlement negotiations; and monitoring and enforcing consent decrees.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 8 years' experience building and litigating civil rights cases, from intake to case settlement or trial, with significant expertise in Section 1983 litigation in federal court; the Prison Litigation Reform Act; qualified immunity; and supervisory liability claims. Their expertise will also include best practices in representing Black and Brown clients and those from low income backgrounds. They will be an experienced manager and mentor who delegates thoughtfully, models effective interpersonal communication and collaborates across departments. They will have a refined expertise in the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, anti-Indigenous policies, anti-poverty policies, and other social and political patterns that define the legal system in the deep south. Given SCHR's mission, we are particularly interested in applicants who have been intimately impacted by the carceral system, poverty, and the criminalization of Black and Brown folks in the U.S.

Southern Center for Human Rights has retained the services of Monday Morning Consultants to lead this search. Please see their website for more details.

ABOUT SOUTHERN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SCHR is working for equality, dignity, and justice for people impacted by the criminal legal system in the Deep South. SCHR fights for a world free from mass incarceration, the death penalty, the criminalization of poverty, and racial injustice.

Over its nearly 50 year history, SCHR has litigated precedent-setting cases in the South, in hostile climates, against all odds. SCHR has forced county, state, and federal governments to make significant improvements in prisons and jails to reduce overcrowding, provide adequate medical and mental health care, and abate violence and abuse. We have argued and won five death penalty cases at the U.S. Supreme Court, four of which challenged profound race discrimination in capital trials. Our combined litigation and policy advocacy helped bring about the creation of a statewide public defender system in Georgia.

The Impact Litigation Unit (ILU) challenges unconstitutional practices of the criminal legal system through federal and state litigation in Alabama and Georgia. Over the last decade, the ILU's work has included cases on behalf of people whose poverty leads to arrest and longer jail stays, people who are denied attorneys in their criminal cases, people who experience human rights abuses in prisons and jails, and people who have been harmed by police. Many ILU actions represent classes of people, though the ILU does take on individual representation from time to time. Frequently, our clients experience discrimination and abuse because of their race, religion, LGBTQ identity, mental health challenges, physical and developmental disabilities, and histories of trauma.

OPPORTUNITIES FACING THE SENIOR ATTORNEY, IMPACT LITIGATION UNIT (ILU)

FEDERAL AND STATE LITIGATION

- Manage the day-to-day aspects of class action case load, including: initiating and maintaining trust and transparency with clients; drafting complaints, briefs, litigation correspondence, and discovery documents; taking depositions; preparing for and conducting evidentiary hearings; conducting settlement negotiations; and monitoring and enforcing consent decrees
- Work collaboratively with the ILU Director, staff attorneys, investigators, and intake coordinator to initiate cases that align with SCHR's strategic vision and mission

COLLABORATION WITHIN AND ACROSS UNITS

- Collaborate with the ILU Director to execute a strategy that challenges the criminalization of poverty, human rights abuses in prisons and jails, issues in policing and other relevant areas of legal advocacy

- Partner with colleagues in the Impact Litigation Unit and across the organization, contribute to knowledge sharing and seamless workflow across units and consult on shared casework
- Ensure case work, client communication, litigation correspondence and other duties align with the strategy and workflow of ILU and the mission and goals of SCHR
- Maintain relationships with sector colleagues (civil rights advocates, organizers) and other leaders across the region to help identify cases, inform strategy and build new networks and partnerships across Georgia and Alabama

SUPERVISION AND MENTORING, STAFF ATTORNEYS AND INVESTIGATORS

- Serve as a repository of expertise on impact litigation, prison conditions, and the carcel system
- Support staff attorneys and investigators through the litigation process from intake to initial stages of drafting a complaint to the final stages of case settlement or trial

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

- Represent SCHR at regional and national convenings, building relationships across the sector
- Draft and publish white papers, policy reports, and other educational materials to drive policy change and educate the public and partners on civil rights abuses
- Maintain relationships with existing case partners and co-counsel while building new relationships with potential co-counsel in Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and other regions across the deep south
- Speak with members of the press and collaborate on op-eds, press releases and other media drive advocacy and community education

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SENIOR ATTORNEY, IMPACT LITIGATION UNIT

- A minimum of 8 years of progressive experience as a civil rights attorney, class action litigator, or similar role;
- Expertise in Section 1983 litigation in federal court; 11th circuit law; the Prison Litigation Reform Act; qualified immunity; and supervisory liability;
- Experience managing and mentoring junior staff including attorneys, paralegals, fellows, investigators and interns;
- Knowledge of how the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow thrives in policing, prison conditions, the criminalization of race, gender identity, disability and poverty and demonstrated application of that knowledge to professional work;
- A deep understanding of prison conditions and the criminalization of poverty with the cultural competence and care necessary to connect with clients at their most vulnerable;

- Exceptional written and oral communication skills and the ability to compel stakeholders and opposing parties including but not limited to: the Department of Corrections, General Counsel, clients, and community members;

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SENIOR ATTORNEY

- Management tactics that are informed by emotional intelligence, initiative, assertiveness, compassion resilience, and exceptional interpersonal relationship management skills;
- Success building coalitions and relationships with sector partners, co-counsel, community organizers, client families and other key stakeholders;
- A collaborative leadership style with the ability to balance working on multiple cases and assignments at once and a demonstrated track record of grace under pressure;
- The ability and desire to respond to rapidly changing demands with flexibility;
- The ability and willingness to travel frequently within Georgia and Alabama

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS DETAILS

The salary for this role is within the range of $100,000 – $115,000, depending on experience. SCHR offers an excellent, 100% premium paid benefit package including medical, dental, vision care, and life insurance. Additional benefits include modest stipends for transportation and wellness, access to a flexible spending account, and childcare assistance (if eligible).

HOW TO APPLY

The Southern Center for Human Rights has retained the services of Monday Morning Consultants to lead this search. Please reach out to Erica Nicole Griffin and Jamie Joanou with questions. ericanicole@mondaymorningconsultants.com, jamie@mondaymorningconsultants.com

A full application includes a cover letter and resume. Please email your nominations or materials to apply@mondaymorningconsultants.com