



Legal Director

POSITION OVERVIEW

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. (People Against Landlord Abuse & Tenant Exploitation) seeks a dynamic, self-motivated and committed individual to lead our legal department. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. began offering direct legal services in 2021. As such, we need an individual who can play a major role in building P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.'s legal department "from the ground up." The ideal candidate will have some supervisory experience and several years of demonstrated commitment to tenants' rights. The legal director, in addition to directly handling cases, will also supervise other attorneys and staff.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide legal representation and advocacy to clients with housing issues.
- Provide housing court litigation inclusive of Housing and Supreme Court trials, administrative hearings, appeals and any other matters related to the preservation of affordable housing
- Engage in non- and pre-litigation advocacy with opposing counsel, property owners, and managing agents.
- Handle a full caseload of full representation non-payment and holdover proceedings in Housing Court, which involves frequent motion practice, discovery, and depositions.
- Handle litigation before administrative agencies as necessary, including NYCHA termination of tenancy proceedings, DHCR matters, and proceedings where clients' Section 8 vouchers are being terminated.
- Conduct weekly legal clinics, evaluate matters for potential representation, and provide legal advice.
- Conduct legal research; draft and file court pleadings; engage in motion practice, including motions for contempt when appropriate; negotiate and draft stipulations of settlement and follow through to ensure enforcement and compliance.
- Participate in and/or lead periodic tenant association evening meetings when representing a group of tenants.
- Update case management system, maintain and update files and case notes, and assist in grant reporting when needed.
- Compile and analyze programmatic statistical information for program reports.
- Participate in community-based outreach initiatives on housing issues.

EXPERIENCE & QUALIFICATIONS

- Admission to New York Bar
- Ability to speak, read, and write Spanish fluently is required.
- Litigation experience
- A deep commitment to advocating and litigating on behalf of working-class, lower-income, and marginalized communities.
- Demonstrated commitment to public interest law and social justice.
- Excellent legal writing, research, litigation, and advocacy skills.
- A proven ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups of people, offices, agencies, and organizations.
- Excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to work collaboratively and interact with clients, program staff, and management.
- Knowledge of government benefits and other civil legal issues a plus.

COMPENSATION

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. offers a generous benefits package, including health, dental, and vision insurance, paid sick/personal days, vacation time with rollover days, retirement account, etc. The salary range for this position is \$110,000-\$140,000. This is a Monday-Thursday full time salaried/ exempt/non-union position.

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. is an equal employment opportunity employer. People of color, transgender and gender non-conforming people, survivors of violence, people with disabilities and individuals of diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, height, weight, national origin, disability, or citizen, marital, veteran, or HIV status.

TO APPLY

Please send a cover letter, one writing sample, salary requirements, and resume via e-mail to Elsia Vasquez, Executive Director, at elsia.vasquez@palanteharlem.org. All attachments should be in MS Word or PDF form. Please note "Housing Attorney Applicant – Your Name" in the subject line. Applications will be reviewed and interviews scheduled in person on a rolling basis.

ABOUT P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. began informally in September 2006 when nearly 100 community residents, living in three dilapidated buildings in Harlem, banded together to form a tenant association to address the neglect and property abandonment at the hands of its unscrupulous landlord. We took the landlord to housing court and initiated a \$5 million lawsuit in State Supreme Court to address rent overcharges, the landlord's failure to provide lease renewals, missing security deposits and frivolous rent apartment registrations.

We succeeded in achieving the first successful tenant-initiated Article 7A transfer in eight years. (The landlord was removed from management responsibilities of the properties and enrolled in HPD's 7A program.) The leaders of the group formed People Against Landlord Abuse and Tenant Exploitation (P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.) Harlem in 2008, to empower local residents in the community to effectively address housing problems and hold landlords accountable.

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.'s goal is to end tenant exploitation in order to enable low-income community residents to remain in their homes and to ensure that those homes are safe and affordable.