



## **An Invitation to Apply**

# **THE NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE Law & Policy Director**

### **THE SEARCH**

The Board of Trustees of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (the Institute), an urban advocacy and research nonprofit based in Newark, New Jersey, seeks a Law & Policy Director (the Director). This is an exciting opportunity for a sophisticated, dynamic team player to direct, manage, and implement a program of strategic legal and policy advocacy to expand racial and social justice in New Jersey. This position requires a deeply committed professional with a passion for justice to perform a key role in guiding the Institute's work to advance its three programmatic areas: (1) economic mobility; (2) criminal justice reform; and (3) civic engagement. A member of the Institute's senior management team, the Law & Policy Director will report directly to the President & CEO.

Now in its 19th year of operations, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice is New Jersey's premier strategic innovator in demonstration programs and policy reform addressing urban issues. Using a holistic approach to address the unique and critical issues facing New Jersey's urban communities, the Institute advocates for systemic reform that is transformative, achievable in the state, and replicable in communities across the nation. The Institute identifies, analyzes and addresses the underlying causes of social and economic disparities and challenges the barriers that constrain cities and their residents from achieving their full potential.

Established in 1999 by the Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Foundation, the Institute provides a dynamic and independent voice for change necessary to create just, vibrant, and inclusive urban communities throughout New Jersey. The broad mission of the Institute recognizes that injustices facing the urban poor are interrelated and interlocking.

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national, executive search firm, to assist in identifying and recruiting exceptional leaders as candidates for this position.

### **THE NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

#### **The Mission**

The mission of the Institute is to ensure that urban residents live in a society that respects their humanity, provides equality of economic opportunity, empowers them to use their voice in political processes, and protects equal justice.

The Institute employs a broad range of advocacy tools to advance its ambitious urban agenda, including research, analysis and writing, public education, grassroots organizing, communications, development of pilot programs, legislative strategies, and litigation.

The Institute's activities are framed within three key pillars:

- **The Economic Mobility Pillar** focuses on ensuring equality of economic opportunity for residents in our urban communities through work on employment, transportation, housing, and access to credit.
- **The Criminal Justice Reform Pillar** is designed to advocate for comprehensive criminal justice reform to address systemic issues in policing, incarceration, and reentry. The objective of this pillar is to contribute to the creation of a rational and effective criminal justice system that (1) strengthens communities by treating people of color fairly and equally; (2) provides alternatives to incarceration; (3) protects constitutional rights; (4) allows people with convictions to successfully reintegrate into society; and (5) increases law enforcement responsiveness, accountability, and transparency.
- **The Civic Engagement Pillar** focuses on (1) building a progressive, policy-driven agenda to protect and expand democracy in New Jersey; (2) providing a space for robust discussions with candidates, policy makers, and elected officials, focused on social justice issues; and (3) preparing voters to realize maximum participation in the next several election cycles and collecting and analyzing data from those elections to identify and offer policy recommendations to address voting barriers.

The innovative programs and initiatives of the Institute and its pioneering work are under the leadership of President & CEO, Ryan P. Haygood, a nationally-respected civil rights lawyer. Prior to leading the Institute, Ryan served as the deputy director of litigation at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund Inc. (LDF), where he worked for more than a decade and litigated some of the most important civil rights cases of our time. In his role at the Institute, Ryan leverages his national legal expertise to advance the Institute's work in empowering New Jersey's urban communities. The goal is for residents of these communities to be treated fairly by the criminal justice system and have access to full-time, meaningful jobs, affordable housing, credit, and the democratic process.

Called a "social justice think and do tank" by a prominent national foundation, the Institute's successes and tangible results include:

- Research and published the report, *Bridging the Two Americas: Employment & Economic Opportunity in Newark & Beyond*, which formed the foundation for Mayor Ras Baraka's bold initiative to connect 2,020 Newark residents to local work that pays a living wage by 2020;
- Successful launch of the "150 Years is Enough" campaign, which seeks to transform New Jersey's youth incarceration system into a community-based system of care by closing two of New Jersey's three youth prisons, the New Jersey Training School for Boys ("Jamesburg") and the Female Secure Care and Intake Facility ("Hayes");
- A path-breaking construction training program that has enabled more than 400 Newark metropolitan residents to become members of construction trade unions and led the state to commit up to \$30 million to replicate the program statewide;
- Research and advocacy that led to the passage of landmark legislation to combat predatory lending and to the first appellate court decision nationwide that recognized predatory lending as a civil rights violation;
- Launch of the Juvenile Justice Reform Initiative, a comprehensive effort to achieve meaningful reform and significantly improved outcomes for vulnerable youth;

- Analysis and action regarding a highly significant but frequently overlooked barrier to employment – driver’s license suspension for non-driving related matters. The Institute’s work led to the creation of a pilot court program in Essex County that is restoring partial driving privileges so that participants can obtain jobs and pay their back fines;
- Prisoner re-entry initiatives, including convening a year-long State Roundtable of policy leaders to devise joint strategies, launching a New Careers Program for ex-offenders, helping staff a National Governor’s Association demonstration and working with state and city of Newark officials to implement policy recommendations.

## **Founding and Governance of the Institute**

The Institute was founded by Alan Lowenstein and his wife, Amy. Alan Lowenstein, born and raised in Newark, established the law firm of Lowenstein, Sandler, one of the largest and most prominent firms in the state of New Jersey today. In founding the Institute, Alan Lowenstein sought, in his words, to create “an organization oriented to action that can turn thoughtful and sustained attention to some of the greatest public policy and legal challenges facing our cities in a manner that identifies the root causes of social ills and develops realistic and lasting solutions.” After providing the operating funds to start the Institute during its first five years, the Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Foundation provided an endowment gift of \$7 million to the Institute in 2005.

Under the leadership of its current board chair, Rutgers Law School Professor and notable attorney, Douglas S. Eakeley, the Institute’s board consists of an exceptionally prominent group of New Jerseyans, drawn from the bar, industry, and state’s most prominent civil rights and social justice advocates. They give the organization judgment, political and substantive expertise, visibility when necessary, and access to most opinion makers in the state. For more information on the Institute, visit [www.njisj.org](http://www.njisj.org).

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITES FOR THE DIRECTOR**

### **Advance the Institute’s strategic vision for policy and legal programs.**

The Director will work closely with the President & CEO, senior leadership team, and staff to develop and implement a strategic plan that identifies programmatic priorities, articulates clear benchmarks, and maps out strategic next steps. Key to this position will be building a robust policy and legal program that resonates with New Jersey’s urban communities and beyond, through cutting-edge short- and long-term legal and advocacy strategies. The Director will monitor implementation of the Institute’s strategic vision for legal programs, including the integration of legislative initiatives, policy goals, public education, strategic campaigns, and, as necessary, litigation.

### **Manage the policy and legal staff.**

The Director will recruit, manage and supervise the policy and legal staff, inspiring and supporting these talented and hard-working individuals in their excellent work. The Director will facilitate a sense of institutional understanding and common goals, enhance communications among staff members, and help to ensure a workplace culture based on mutual respect and teamwork. In addition, the Director will ensure that staff members, including lawyers and fellows, paralegals, and law student interns are afforded appropriate opportunities for training and professional development.

**Build and strengthen strategic relationships with other organizations and associations.**

The Director will strengthen relationships with existing allies, and expand coalitions with the civil rights community, social justice and policy reform organizations, unions, and other potential allies across the legal and policy spectrum. By facilitating increased collaboration among and between these groups, the Director will broaden the reach and effectiveness of the Institute's national public advocacy efforts.

**Effectively communicate with different constituent groups to define and advance the Institute's priorities.**

The next Director, in collaboration with the communications team, will spearhead the development and presentation of the Institute's advocacy materials, including through public education materials, policy reports, white papers, talking points, op-eds, and press releases to advance its public policy agenda.

The Director will serve as one of the Institute's primary spokespeople on these policy issues and cultivate relationships with elected and appointed officials and state and federal policy makers. S/he will communicate the organization's priorities and policies to sister organizations, public interest law firms, legal service agencies, other members of the legal community, and other important stakeholders, including federal and state policy makers.

**Play an active role in soliciting and securing new sources of unrestricted funding while sustaining and building upon foundation support.**

The Director will work closely with the President & CEO and COO to cultivate relationships with current supporters, establish relationships with new major donors as sources of unrestricted funding, and build upon the Institute's already broad base of foundation support.

**Guide the direction and execution of the organization's legal work.**

The new Director will manage requests for legal assistance and creatively develop, lead and implement a strategic impact litigation program that advances social justice issues to address new or settled legal principles, and in consultation with the President & CEO, select cases for the institute. S/he will identify and research relevant legal issues, and follow current and pending litigation, as well as opportunities for amicus briefs, draft demand letters, legal memoranda, and advocacy letters.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

For this critical role, the Institute seeks a seasoned manager who has a clearly demonstrated commitment to the organization's mission and values. The Director must be an excellent team builder, an outstanding communicator, a strategic thinker, and a leader willing to work as part of a high-powered team dedicated to securing social change. The Director will leverage broad exposure to the full range of advocacy tools, from organizing and issue analysis to litigation and legislation. The ideal candidate will have many of the following professional experience and personal characteristics:

- A law degree with expertise and a minimum of ten years of experience as a practicing attorney with experience in policy development and analysis and/or litigation;
- A passion for and demonstrated commitment to civil rights and social justice in urban communities, especially involving responses to entrenched poverty and related barriers to social and economic equity;

- An ability to work effectively with diverse coalitions and community groups, particularly of color, and to work across political ideology, race, ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and religion;
- Excellent research and writing skills, superior attention to detail, ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously, and good problem-solving skills;
- A positive and professional attitude with excellent judgment, flexibility, determination, and grace in a sometimes high-pressure office;
- Persuasive written and oral communicator who exhibits an inviting and engaging persona to energize and galvanize a broad range of audiences;
- Respect by and for the advocacy, academic, research, litigation and pro bono communities;
- Experience in or capacity for fundraising, specifically raising money from major donors and foundations;
- A management style that respects and builds on the independence and capacities of others, encourages input and feedback, inspires trust, and motivates staff members at all levels to work together in new and effective ways;
- A demonstrated commitment to recruiting, retaining, and training a diverse talented staff, as well as a track record in providing quality professional development opportunities for staff members;
- Strong diplomatic and interpersonal skills and an ability to navigate differences of opinion with grace and humility;
- Ability to listen, coach, shepherd, and support people to achieve shared goals;
- Commitment to the highest ethical and professional standards;
- Willingness to travel as necessary; and
- A sense of urgency about the need to realize racial and social justice in our urban communities.

#### TO APPLY

Please send all nominations, referrals and/or résumés, with a cover letter, to the address below. We will retain all materials in the strictest confidence. Electronic submission of all material is expected.

[maryeking@comcast.net](mailto:maryeking@comcast.net)

Please direct questions to:  
Monroe “Bud” Moseley, Vice President  
Isaacson, Miller  
617-262-6500

*The Institute is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity. Accordingly, the Institute will provide equal opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability, pregnancy, religion, national origin, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, and/or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training and development, promotion, termination, layoff, compensation, benefits, and all other conditions, terms, and privileges of employment in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.*