

Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer

The Legal Aid Society

New York, NY

Salary: \$180,000 - \$205,000

The Organization

The Legal Aid Society, the nation's largest and oldest public defense and civil legal services provider is dedicated to a simple yet powerful mission: ensuring that no individual is denied the right to equal justice. For 148 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long – working on the front lines and behind the scenes to offer the people we serve the exceptional legal services they deserve. Through our Civil, Criminal Defense, and Juvenile Rights Practices, we offer an unmatched depth and breadth of legal expertise to vulnerable New Yorkers every year in over 200,000 individual legal matters while also impacting millions with effective advocacy, impact litigation and legislative agenda. We are dedicated to blunting the impact of poverty on individuals, families, and communities.

The Position

The nearly 2,300 members of our staff who provide direct representation and advocacy and the administrative infrastructure for our organization are key to our success and ability to meet our mission. To ensure that we continuously center equity, intentionally foster diversity, and provide an inclusive and affirming workplace for our staff and by extension volunteers and clients, we are seeking a Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer.

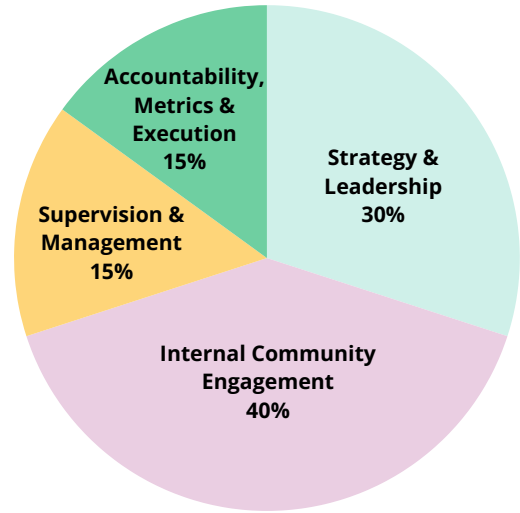
Directly reporting to the Attorney-in-Chief and CEO, the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer is responsible for providing vision and leadership to The Legal Aid Society's efforts to ensure diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) in all our work. The Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer will be a key leader and adviser ensuring The Legal Aid Society's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy is deeply integrated into The Legal Aid Society's strategic planning, culture, and processes.

The Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer will bring deep expertise around DEI practices, principles, and experience leading large-scale culture and systemic change. The candidate will be an exceptional strategist, communicator, and facilitator who can create a vision, a road map for achieving that vision, and garner the collective buy-in and accountability required to achieve organizational change. The Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer will work in close partnership with The Legal Aid Society's Attorney-in-Chief and CEO and colleagues on the executive leadership team, as well as staff members across the entire organization, to support the development and implementation of a framework and vision for The Legal Aid Society's equity and inclusion work.

ROLE OVERVIEW

Internal Community Engagement

- Partner with The Legal Aid Society's HR team to help deepen and strengthen an inclusive and diverse internal culture and reinforce DEI principles in employee policies and practice, including recruitment and retention.
- Maintain an informed understanding of staff working conditions and experience by developing and engaging relationships within and external to our community.
- Collaborate with the Communications team to ensure DEI values are embedded in both internal and external messaging.
- Represent the organization in external DEI research, surveys, and industry groups.
- Create and implement mandatory DEI training programs for managers, staff during onboarding, and across the organization to foster a shared understanding of DEI principles.
- Develop a framework for staff to foster respectful conversations regarding DEI topics.
- Serve as a resource and first responder for staff experiencing discrimination while working inside or outside of the organization providing resources, support, and a plan of action for the individual, their supervisor, team, and the larger organization.



Strategy & Leadership

- Foster a culture of inclusion, respect, and trust across all levels and with external partners, reducing DEI-related complaints and improving employee experience within all work environments.
- Ensure that the voices of staff are heard, respected, and valued and that staff experience reflects this.
- Advise the executive leadership team on DEI-related issues, ensuring accountability and awareness at the highest levels and support advocacy and change strategies that will lead to affirming and safer environments where employees work.
- Ensure that the objectives and underlying values of The Legal Aid Society's DEI work are clear, communicated, and understood, and reflected in The Legal Aid Society's culture and processes.
- In close partnership with the LGBTQ+ Unit and the Racial Justice Unit, support the creation and implementation of the DEI vision, strategy, and framework, in alignment with The Legal Aid Society's values and strategic plan.

Accountability, Metrics & Execution

- Establish and communicate clear and measurable DEI goals, initiatives and KPIs, regularly tracking and reporting progress to executive and senior leaders.
- Utilize quantitative and qualitative data and analytics to evaluate the effectiveness of DEI initiatives, ensuring that progress is monitored, reported, and aligned with the unit and organization's strategic objectives.

Accountability, Metrics & Execution (cont.)

- Partner with executive, senior and mid-level leaders to support the development and implementation of processes to swiftly respond to DEI challenges, minimizing delays from approval layers and ensure prompt action on critical issues.
- Create systems for regular updates on DEI progress, promoting accountability across all levels of the organization and ensuring that staff are committed to DEI objectives.

Supervision & Management

- Assess current DEI operations and resources, identifying strengths, capabilities, and gaps, and propose necessary changes to support the organization’s DEI initiatives. Current DEI operations are supported by the DEI Program Manager, external consultants, and staff from teams across the organization such as HR.
- Supervise the DEI operations and the Program Manager, including hiring, role development, performance assessments, and professional growth.
- Manage the department budget and ensure resources are used effectively, including selecting and overseeing external vendors and consultants.
- Offer continuous support and guidance to staff, promoting active and meaningful engagement in advancing the organization’s DEI initiatives.

The Legal Aid Society Fast Facts		
Budget	Total Number of Staff	Locations, Units & Unions
400M+	2250+	Locations: 25+ Units/Depts:40+ Union Chapters: 3

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate for the CDEIO position possesses the following competencies:

Organizational Savvy Maneuvering comfortably through complex policy, process, and people related organizational dynamics.	Balances Stakeholders Anticipating and balancing the needs of multiple stakeholders in a diplomatic fashion.	Drives Results Consistently achieving results, even under tough circumstances
Interpersonal Savvy Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people.	Manages Complexity Making sense of complex, high quantity, and sometimes contradictory information to effectively solve problems.	Instills Trust Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity, and authenticity

Additional Qualifications

- **Educational & Professional Experience:** Bachelor's degree with a minimum of ten years of relevant experience in DEI leadership or an equivalent combination of education and experience. JD or master's degree preferred.
- **Extensive Leadership in DEI:** Proven track record of leading diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across various dimensions (race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability) within large, complex organizations. Experience in nonprofit settings preferred.
- **Strategic Planning & Execution:** Experience developing and implementing strategic DEI plans, creating frameworks, and establishing metrics to measure progress.
- **Comprehensive DEI Knowledge:** Deep understanding of systemic discrimination, oppression, and diverse DEI frameworks. Knowledge of legal requirements related to EEO and human rights laws, and experience with unionized workplaces.
- **Cultural Competency & Sensitivity:** Demonstrated ability to address cultural, racial, and identity issues, and create inclusive environments. Proficiency in managing conflicts and resolving DEI-related challenges constructively.
- **Excellent Communication & Facilitation Skills:** Skilled in facilitating challenging conversations, building trust with diverse stakeholders, and serving as an effective spokesperson. Strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication abilities.
- **Data Analysis & Reporting:** Proficiency in using data and metrics to track DEI progress, measure effectiveness, and inform decision-making.
- **Relationship Building & Advocacy:** Ability to build productive relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and influence organizational policies and practices.
- **Change Management & Leadership:** Demonstrated experience in managing meaningful change, empowering staff, and leading across various departments. Ability to translate strategic vision into actionable plans and solve complex problems.
- **Learning & Development:** Experience in building and implementing learning systems that support and advance DEI principles and values.

WHO WE ARE

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The Legal Aid Society is committed to a work culture of zealous advocacy, respect, diversity and inclusion, client-oriented defense and advocacy, access to justice and excellent representation. We are dedicated to building a strong professional relationship with the people we serve, to understanding their diverse circumstances, and to meeting their needs. Our ability to achieve these goals depends on the efforts of all of us.

As an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Employer, The Legal Aid Society prohibits discriminatory employment actions against and treatment of its employees and applicants for employment based on actual or perceived race or color, size (including bone structure, body size, height, shape, and weight), religion or creed, alienage or citizenship status, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity (one's internal deeply-held sense of one's gender which may be the same or different from one's sex assigned at birth); gender expression (the representation of gender as expressed through, for example, one's name, choice of pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics; gender expression may not conform to traditional gender-based stereotypes assigned to specific gender identities), disability, marital status, relationship and family structure (including domestic partnerships, polyamorous families and individuals, chosen family, platonic co-parents, and multigenerational families), genetic information or predisposing genetic characteristics, military status, domestic violence victim status, arrest or pre-employment conviction record, credit history, unemployment status, caregiver status, salary history, or any other characteristic protected by law.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salary

\$180,000 - \$205,000

Benefits

Employees receive a generous benefits package including options for 100% coverage of health insurance benefits and flexible work and time-off arrangements. [Visit our website](#) for the full list of benefits offered to staff.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in this position, please [click here](#). All applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of their application.

We encourage candidates of all backgrounds to apply even if you do not meet all the qualifications outlined above. If you are selected to move forward for an initial screening call, we expect you to hear from us by October.

Lori Clement
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Talent Consultant

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[Submit an application](#)

