LawyersForChildren
Protecting Rights. Changing Lives.
Celebrating 40 Years

POSITION:	**DIRECTOR OF LITIGATION**
LOCATION:	**NEW YORK, NY**
REPORTS TO:	**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
STATUS:	**FULL-TIME, EXEMPT**
SCHEDULE:	**HYBRID**

ABOUT LAWYERS FOR CHILDREN

When children are before the New York City Family Courts, the biggest decisions in their lives can often be made for them, without their input. At Lawyers For Children, our mission is to give children a voice in the decisions that critically impact their lives. Since LFC's founding in 1984, our attorneys and social workers have been listening to their clients, protecting their legal rights, and empowering them with the tools and resources they need to grow and thrive.

Lawyers For Children uses a pioneering interdisciplinary staffing model in which a lawyer and social worker, both with extensive experience and training, work together on *every* case. In addition, LFC was the first children's law office in the country to employ two full-time Youth Advocates (young adults who have successfully aged out of foster care) to provide additional support for older clients. Each LFC team includes individuals with expertise in both the law and the full range of existing services, ensuring a successful future for every one of our young clients.

Since 1984, we have represented almost 100,000 children in New York City court proceedings involving: voluntary foster care placement, abuse, neglect, delinquency, PINS, termination of parental rights, custody and visitation, adoption, guardianship, and paternity. We listen carefully to our clients, help them understand their options, and vigorously protect their right to a safe, secure, and supportive place to call home. For some clients, this means returning to live safely with their families. For others, it means speeding up the adoption process. For many of our clients over 18, the goal is to set out on their own with stable housing, a stable source of income, and the knowledge and support network needed to live independently and build successful careers.

Each year, our staff of over 70 professionals represents over 3,000 individual children in more than 6,000 court proceedings. Our advocacy helps children find safe, loving homes and helps minimize the trauma of court and child welfare intervention in their lives. We also help youth aging out of foster care access the education, housing, and employment they need to transition to independence. We are continuously evolving our practice with special projects that focus on the most vulnerable and underserved among our clients, including LGBTQ youth, children with special educational needs, youth who have experienced sexual abuse and exploitation, children living with intimate partner violence, respondents in delinquency and PINS proceedings, and young people faced with complex immigration issues. Our Public Policy and Special Litigation project tracks recurring challenges for young people across all of our individual cases and uses this data to promote comprehensive reform of the foster care system through both legislative advocacy and class action litigation.

ABOUT THE POSITION

Lawyers For Children is seeking a highly skilled and experienced litigation attorney for the position of Director of Litigation. The Director of Litigation will manage the approximately 25 staff attorneys handling the litigation of all proceedings assigned to LFC in New York Family Courts and collateral courts where we are asked to appear on behalf of our clients. These proceedings include, but are not limited to: abuse, neglect, voluntary placement, destitute minor, termination of parental rights, delinquency, custody, visitation, family offense, guardianship, and paternity proceedings.

The Director of Litigation will also work closely with Lawyers For Children's Executive Team and co-Directors of Social Work as a member of LFC's interdisciplinary Leadership Team. This position requires an individual with excellent courtroom communication, supervisory, and leadership skills. The Director of Litigation will play a key role in helping define the direction of LFC's litigation practice and ensuring the highest level of practice. This individual should exemplify Lawyers For Children's mission, vision, and values to help foster a productive and collaborative work environment.

The ideal candidate will embrace LFC's interdisciplinary team approach to advocacy, on behalf of every client. This role calls for a strategic, forward-thinking leader who is eager to shape the future of the litigation and special projects and practice areas, which currently focus on immigration, education, mental health, LGBTQ+ youth, youth aging out of foster care, youth justice (delinquency), domestic violence, child sexual abuse and exploitation, public policy and appellate advocacy. They will cultivate strong internal and external partnerships, identify opportunities to expand our impact, and create collaborative approaches to emerging areas of our work.

Primary Responsibilities Include:

Attorney Leadership

- Lead and provide guidance to a team of Supervisory Attorneys who manage their own reduced caseloads, while providing general legal case guidance to all legal staff.
- Partner with the Directors of Social Work to strengthen collaboration, resolve case-specific conflicts, and promote client-directed strategic case planning.
- Partner with Executive Leadership to advance the organization's vision and strategic priorities, including those related to equity, inclusion, and respect.
- Integrate cultural sensitivity, respect, and humility throughout the advocacy process.
- Oversee and support Special Projects and Practice Areas.
- Build and maintain collaborative relationships with other legal offices and stakeholders practicing in New York City Family Courts.
- Work collaboratively with supervising judges and jurists in New York City Family Courts and participate in court leadership meetings and relevant court and Bar Association committees.

Attorney Development and Training

- Contribute to the development and implementation of a professional development infrastructure that ensures high-quality legal representation for LFC clients. This includes designing and delivering training that advances LFC's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and strengthens critical litigation skills.

- Identify and address barriers to attorney performance and drive improvement through an effective performance management process.

Litigation

- Oversee day to day litigation in the New York County Family Court and other courts where LFC practices, including reviewing litigation matters, supervising a supervisory team, and providing emergency coverage for complex or contested hearings as needed.
- Maintain an individual caseload of 10-15 cases.
- Facilitate regular Staff Attorney Meetings that address relevant case law, statutes, policies, court operations, and collaboration with Social Work colleagues.

CORE QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

The successful candidate will have a proven track record of relevant attorney leadership and familiarity with child welfare, voluntary, destitute, custody, visitation, delinquency, and protective order cases, and a deep level of understanding and practice in these areas.

- Admission to the New York State Bar and commitment to remain a member of the New York State Bar in good standing for the duration of this employment.
- 10 - 15 years of increasing levels of responsibility including at least 5 years as a supervisor - reflecting significant relevant courtroom litigation and leadership skills in a not-for-profit legal services environment.
- Outstanding writing skills, including drafting legal briefs, memoranda, training materials, and reference guides.
- Exceptional verbal communication and presentation skills, including presenting cases and other important information to all levels of the organization and external counterparts.
- Attention to detail and the ability to efficiently prioritize multiple tasks.
- Exceptional analytical and negotiation skills, including negotiating high-stakes matters before Courts and mediators.
- Exceptional ability to work on interdisciplinary teams for child-focused outcomes.
- Excellent interpersonal and organizational skills, with demonstrated ability to build trust and interact professionally and effectively with all levels of management, attorneys, judges, and other Court staff.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we highlight the following:

- **Ability to Think Strategically and Act Tactically:** The successful candidate operates effectively in both strategic and tactical worlds. The ideal candidate will be strategically oriented to drive the overarching goals of the legal practice, yet tactically focused to ensure that the practice runs smoothly. This individual should build strategies based on a nuanced understanding of legal practice skills and trial strategy, and a desire to support and enhance legal practice both inside and outside of the courtroom.
- **Relationship-Building Skills:** The successful candidate is capable of building and sustaining excellent relationships at multiple levels in the workplace and in the broader advocacy and judicial settings and organizations in which LFC participates. The ideal candidate will have well-honed supervisory skills that will enable them to foster trust and confidence, gain buy-in, and implement important initiatives.
- **Leader/Collaborator/Team Builder:** The successful candidate is a highly collaborative, true team player, coach, and mentor more focused on the success of others than

themselves. They are a leader who sets and demonstrates high standards of emotional intelligence, ethical standards and performance, inspires others to perform on those levels, and ensures effective performance management. The successful candidate is a good listener who is a straightforward, articulate, and open communicator. They should possess communication skills that build trust, create open channels of communication, and achieve collective buy-in.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is $185,000.00 to $205,000.00 annualized. Lawyers For Children offers a comprehensive benefits package including 100% employer-paid medical and dental.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

We are an equal opportunity employer that does not discriminate in its hiring practices and, in order to build the strongest possible workforce, actively seeks a diverse applicant pool. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. We are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace where all employees feel welcome and valued. We believe that diversity and inclusion are essential to our success.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants must submit a resume and cover letter with salary requirements to: **ApplyHR@lawyersforchildren.org**