



Staff Attorney Denver, CO; Boulder CO

Overview:

The COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project (CEDP) was formed in April by The Community Firm, a Colorado non-profit, social enterprise law firm. Our mission is to Keep Coloradans Housed by helping to prevent mass evictions and homelessness during and after the pandemic. The pandemic triggered unprecedented eviction risk for U.S. renters. Nationwide, more than 20M people may be at risk of eviction by the end of the year with more than 300,000 at risk in Colorado alone.

Traditionally, eviction defense has focused on legal services. At CEDP, we are scaling a “managed care” approach to eviction prevention that centers the legal and financial needs of housing insecure families and uses a variety of tools to keep them housed. Our team of housing lawyers, economists, data analysts, policy-experts, organizers, and technologists provides four services: (1) legal representation and other services for tenants facing eviction; (2) data and research published in conjunction with the [Bell Policy Center](#) & the [Aspen Institute](#); (3) advocacy and public policy; and (4) a rental assistance innovation fund.

Our focus in 2021 is scaling paired rental assistance and legal services through the distribution of state and private rental assistance dollars. Through negotiation and/or set deal terms, we settle bills for back and future rent at lower than face value, and pay the landlord in a single payment. The Community Firm uses the difference between the settled amount and the traditional 100% price point to fund legal assistance and resource navigation for additional renter services. After proving the efficacy of this effort in two 2020 pilots, we are scaling the effort in 2021 targeting the distribution of several million dollars in rental assistance by Q2 2021.

More about the job:

The Covid-19 Eviction Defense Project is seeking a full-time staff attorney, who will initially work remotely. As staff attorney, you will interview, advise and directly represent tenants facing eviction and housing insecurity. This will entail, among other responsibilities, negotiating with landlords on behalf of clients, defending tenants facing eviction proceedings in court, filing wrongful eviction or other lawsuits on behalf of clients, and helping develop strategies and choose cases for impact litigation. Other duties include assisting senior lawyers with litigation, undertaking discovery, guiding clients towards available public benefits and providing research for impact litigation as needed. The salary and benefits are competitive and commensurate to experience.

The successful candidate will be compassionate about the representation of low-income clients, willing to work in a fast-paced, private, non-profit law office, and dedicated to the mission of the Covid-19 Eviction Defense Project, which is to keep Coloradans housed. The successful candidate will also have litigation experience (1 to 3 years) and a willingness to function as a legal advocate and zealous defender of tenants’ rights. This full-time role will require legal organizational skills, a collaborative attitude towards clients and co-workers, and investigative skills to help vulnerable clients. While Spanish-language fluency is highly desirable, it is not required for the position. All candidates, however, must be licensed to practice law in Colorado.

The role provides young attorneys the opportunity to develop litigation skills while fighting on the frontlines of the pandemic-related housing crisis. Staff attorneys will shape CEDP’s evolving legal strategy and participate in the development of the organization. CEDP is undergoing a tremendous

amount of growth, creating the opportunity to work on a wide variety of mission-critical efforts.

As Staff Attorney you will:

- Assist with client intake and advise tenants facing housing insecurity on both legal strategy and access to financial resources
- Negotiate with landlords on behalf of tenants to settle rental debt and implement repayment plans
- Represent clients in court who could not avoid eviction proceedings
- Guide or directly represent tenants in filing post-judgment motions, appeals, or affirmative lawsuits
- Assist and collaborate with senior attorneys on research, briefs, memos, and other issues
- Innovate and collaborate with team leaders on the organization's goals, including impact litigation, and the best ways to support tenants facing housing insecurity
- Collaborate with other attorneys practicing landlord-tenant law, including legal aid organizations
- Keep our public-facing legal materials and information accurate and up-to-date
- Collaborate with team leaders on attorney recruitment and training
- Develop creative solutions, whether legal or non-legal, for issues tenants commonly face

We're looking for you if your background and skillsets include:

- 1-3 years litigation experience
- A background working with diverse communities
- Strong self-motivation and time-management skills
- Comfort with ambiguity in a fast-paced, all-hands-on-deck environment
- Demonstrated passion for social impact and social justice
- A motivating desire to learn and develop legal skills both in and out of the courtroom
- Strong legal research, writing, and oral communication skills
- Willingness and desire to fight for tenants' rights in a variety of settings, including negotiations, mediations, in the courtroom, and in various state agencies and organizations
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work collaboratively and proactively

Why Us?

- We're a social enterprise with a sustainable business model focused on one of the most important issues in society – access to and preservation of affordable housing
- Our cofounders have collaborated for 5+ years and are committed to building a company where everyone loves to work
- Unlimited growth potential within the organization
- The opportunity to step into a new firm at its founding and play a substantial role in its growth

To Apply:

- Interested candidates should forward their resume and cover letter to burt@cedproject.org.

Equal Opportunity:

- The Community Firm is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.