



Position Specification

Equal Justice Works
Executive Director

Mobilizing law students and lawyers for equality and justice has never been more important. Equal Justice Works, the national leader in facilitating and growing opportunities for public interest lawyers and leaders, is poised for its next transformative chapter of growth and new directions. If you want to lead an organization to new heights, a unique and inspiring opportunity awaits you.

Who We Are

Equal Justice Works is the national leader in launching public interest lawyers and leaders. Underserved individuals, communities, and causes face an overwhelming need for legal services. We believe that a community of lawyers committed to public service is essential if we are to fulfill our nation's promise of equal justice for all. Equal Justice Works harnesses the support of a broad range of constituencies—law firms, corporations, foundations, individuals, governmental agencies, public service partners, law schools—to build and foster that community of public interest law students and lawyers. Our programming is complex and effective, yet nimble and dynamic. Key components include:

- **Fellowships:** Equal Justice Works offers the nation's largest postgraduate legal fellowship program aimed at tackling critical legal needs across our country. Fellows tailor their own projects or work in planned cohorts to meet critical and evolving needs. Boosted by our signature Leadership Development Training program and supported by a powerful scaffolding of host site organizations, sponsors, staff, and experts, our fellows achieve astonishing outcomes. The fellows' passion and the country's needs create endless opportunities for impact. The organization is poised to grow its fellowship program so that passion and need continue to spark new fellowships and new solutions.
- **Alumni:** A stunning 85% of Equal Justice Works Fellow alumni remain in public interest after the conclusion of their fellowships, and many go on to lead major public interest organizations. They serve succeeding cohorts of Fellows as expert advisors, speakers, and supervisors. Our growing alumni engagement program connects us to more than 2,300 Fellow alumni.
- **Law School Engagement:** We open pathways to public interest work for current law students by creating networking and leadership opportunities and facilitating summer and other short-term fellowships. Equal Justice Works is proud to partner with our member law schools throughout the United States, including more than 90% of all ABA-accredited law schools.
- **Enriching the Public Interest Network:** Our work reaches far beyond our core fellowship programs to strengthen the broader public interest community. We annually host the largest national public interest law Conference & Career Fair. And we see fertile ground to grow our work as the leader in the field of connecting law students with transformative opportunities and strengthening ties throughout the public interest community.
- **Educational Debt Relief:** Financial burdens of tuition debt pose a major obstacle for law graduates seeking public interest careers. The cost of legal education should not prevent law graduates from pursuing public interest legal careers. Equal Justice Works is a member of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coalition and a driving force for tuition and debt reduction and forgiveness.

[Watch how Equal Justice Works Fellows](#) are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

See more about Equal Justice Works at <https://www.equaljusticeworks.org>.

The Role

The next Executive Director will have the exciting opportunity to transform and shape Equal Justice Works for the next era of impact. The Executive Director will be someone who can connect head and heart, express passion for Equal Justice Works' mission, and inspire others. The successful candidate will be a confident and energetic leader who can guide Equal Justice Works to new heights during a time of expanding need, shifts in the national culture, and new expectations for public interest organizations. The next leader of Equal Justice Works will be a persistent and effective advocate for social justice and equity.

The Executive Director's primary responsibilities are to provide the vision and organizational and philanthropic leadership necessary to sustain and build on a track record of consistent growth, best-in-class programming, and innovation. The work of the Executive Director is overseen by a national Board of Directors that includes distinguished federal judges, corporate general counsel, public interest executives, law school deans, private law firm leaders (both plaintiff and defense), law students, and at least one Equal Justice Works fellowship alum. The Board, Executive Director, and staff collaborate to develop and support the strategic direction of the organization, meet operational and fundraising goals, and ensure the organization's overall success and effectiveness. Equal Justice Works has a staff of 45 and an operating budget of about \$22 million. The organization is in strong financial health, with a reserve fund of over \$8 million.

The Executive Director should have the following competencies:

Credibility and Experience: The successful candidate will have extensive leadership experience at a senior management level in a complex organization and the credibility and capacity to lead and inspire Equal Justice Works staff, Fellows, law students, partner organizations, and sponsors. The candidate will bring a demonstrated passion for public interest law. The successful candidate will be a persuasive communicator and a strong public speaker who can articulate Equal Justice Works' vision and be the primary spokesperson for the organization.

Vision and Focus: The successful candidate will be a strategic thinker who will work with senior staff and the Board to establish plans and take action to increase opportunities and realize Equal Justice Works' goals. The candidate will be capable of developing innovative strategies and creative approaches to address diverse audiences and respond to evolving community needs. Along with the Board and management team, Equal Justice Works' next Executive Director will be able to set strategic direction for the organization, prioritize and define clear objectives for staff, and delegate implementation to achieve concrete goals.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Equal Justice Works must exemplify a welcoming culture that values the richness of every individual's life and experience. The Executive Director will set the tone and provide leadership to carry out the organization's diversity, equity and inclusion commitments through specific strategies and tangible acts within the organization and across the broader Equal Justice Works community.

Inclusive and Participatory Management: The people of Equal Justice Works are critical to our ability to achieve our mission. The successful candidate must be an authentic and inclusive talent-manager and developer, foster an environment of trust, and be able to inspire the Equal Justice Works team to pursue its goals with purpose, passion, and integrity. The next Executive Director should have an accomplished record of recruiting, developing, and retaining a high-performing staff and have the emotional intelligence to effectively engage and communicate across all organizational relationships.

Development: Equal Justice Works must continue to grow and diversify its base of support, which is a key to expanding its impact. The Executive Director must embrace fundraising and view it as a core priority, bringing the experience necessary to be the organization's primary fundraiser with foundations, corporations, major donors, and governmental entities.

Partnership Building and Thought Leadership: The next Executive Director will contribute thought leadership on issues that relate to public service law and the broader public interest community. They must be skilled in identifying and working with allies on core objectives—from discerning unmet legal needs and the new resources that will enable Equal Justice Fellows to address them, to opening the public interest pipeline by reducing tuition burdens and associated debt.

Desired Skills and Experiences

Strong candidates will bring many of the following attributes:

- Genuine interest in and demonstrated passion for Equal Justice Works' mission and programs.
- Leadership experience at a senior management level in a complex organization, including experience with financial oversight of a not-for-profit organization. Prior nonprofit management experience a plus.
- Significant fundraising experience or appetite, familiarity with basic accounting principles, human resources practices, and standard office technology and systems.
- Demonstrated commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Ability to work collaboratively with a national Board of Directors, and to develop talent and motivate and lead a team.

Contact

Nomination and application process

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Interested candidates should submit confidentially, a resume and letter of interest to equaljusticeworks@russellreynolds.com

Equal Justice Works is an equal opportunity employer. Our policy is to hire without regard to race, color, national origin, genetic information, religious belief, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, pregnancy, disability, protected veteran status, or any other protected classifications, activities, or conditions as required by applicable laws.