



*Building the bridges for people to go from serving life to living it.*

1300-G El Paseo Rd. #310, Las Cruces, NM 88001

[www.de-serving.org](http://www.de-serving.org)

**Job Title: Staff AttorneyLocation: New Mexico**

**Compensation: \$75,000 / year.** This position is currently funded for one year, and employment beyond the year will be contingent on continued funding.

**Application Deadline:** Friday, August 23

**About (De)serving Life:**

**Mission:** To empower incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals through legal and reentry services and build bridges for people to go from serving life to living it.

**Vision:** A New Mexico that has a system of public safety focused on healing from harm, rather than punishment, for all those impacted.

**Values:** humility, dignity, community, healing, accountability.

(De)serving Life was founded to challenge systemic injustices within the criminal legal system and promote healing and rehabilitation by providing holistic advocacy and support services for individuals navigating parole eligibility and re-entry after serving extreme sentences for crimes committed as children. Since our full-time launch in August 2023, we have been dedicated to providing quality advocacy for those who are parole-eligible, resulting in parole grants for nine individuals. Our mission also involves advocating for fair parole processes and providing holistic support services for those released from prison.

**Job Summary:**

We are seeking a compassionate and dedicated Staff Attorney to join our team. This is a new, grant-funded position currently funded for one year, with the possibility of extension based on continued funding. As a young and growing organization, we are committed to expanding our comprehensive parole advocacy work across New Mexico. Although we do not have a physical office yet, we are actively building our capacity to grow and serve a greater number of people navigating the discretionary parole process throughout our state.

**Role Overview:**

The Staff Attorney will provide pro bono legal support to clients navigating the discretionary parole process, focusing on those serving life and other extreme sentences for

crimes committed as juveniles. Responsibilities also include assisting and providing consultations to client populations serving life sentences, such as geriatric and medically fragile individuals, and those sentenced as young adults.

The position also involves legal support for formerly incarcerated individuals who have returned home after serving life and other extreme sentences to support their successful reintegration into society.

Additionally, the Staff Attorney will engage in statewide outreach and training, with a focus on educating and empowering both individuals and our community partners in rural areas of the state.

An ideal candidate will be able to provide trauma-informed legal support with kindness and confidentiality, demonstrating empathy for incarcerated individuals and their families, and have a collaborative spirit when working with colleagues and community partners.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

#### **Direct Representation:**

- Manage a caseload of individual clients, including representation in parole hearings, post-conviction relief cases, and other legal matters related to incarceration and reentry.
- Represent clients at their parole hearings and advocate on their behalf in various legal settings.
- Lead and coordinate multidisciplinary team, to include legal assistant, mitigation specialist, and forensic experts in parole advocacy.
- Conduct client interviews, gather evidence, and prepare parole application submissions for the parole board's review.

#### **Client Advocacy and Support:**

- Develop and maintain strong relationships with clients, providing holistic support and guidance throughout their legal journey.
- Advocate for clients' rights and best interests in interactions with parole boards, correctional facilities, and other stakeholders.
- Provide post-release legal services to support clients' successful release, including housing, employment, and compliance with parole conditions.
- Collaborate with service providers and reentry assistants to support clients' transition home.

#### **Outreach, Training, and Travel:**

- Travel to rural areas to conduct legal clinics, trainings, and outreach events to disseminate legal knowledge and promote self-advocacy in rural communities.
- Conduct in-person legal advice and counsel sessions tailored to the unique needs of rural communities, providing legal support on issues arising from criminal records.

- Develop and deliver Know Your Rights curriculum and trainings to empower individuals with essential legal knowledge on legal issues such as housing, consumer rights, family law, employment, government benefits, health, and disability rights.
- Create legal publications, including a comprehensive Pro Se Support Manual for parole and reentry, support self-advocacy and democratize legal knowledge.

### **Manage and Review Consultation Services:**

- Oversee the intake and selection of clients for our parole consultation services.
- Conduct consultations to offer personalized legal guidance, particularly for vulnerable populations like geriatric and medically fragile individuals, and those sentenced for crimes committed as young adults.
- Create detailed written consultation memos based on thorough reviews of client records for those we cannot fully represent before the parole board, ensuring they receive the guidance needed to navigate the parole process and helping improve their chances of parole success.
- Collaborate with clients to review, edit, and draft their consultation memos, incorporating their feedback to better meet their needs.
- Train and support volunteers, including law students and attorneys, to collaborate with clients and prepare consultation memos for those navigating the discretionary parole process.

### **Legal Staff Supervision:**

- Supervise legal support staff and volunteers, providing mentorship and guidance to support their professional development.
- Collaborate with the (De)serving Life team to develop and implement training and mentorship opportunities for new staff and volunteers.

### **Policy and Systemic Advocacy:**

- Support policy advocacy to promote parole reform and improve reentry outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Monitor and analyze legislative developments, advocating for policies that align with (De)serving Life's mission and values.
- Collaborate with coalition partners to advance systemic changes in the criminal legal system.

### **Experience:**

- Attorney licensed in the state of New Mexico.
- Experience working with people incarcerated in jail or prison (preferred but not required).
- Experience or familiarity with New Mexico's discretionary parole system (preferred but not required).
- Experience supervising attorneys or other legal staff (preferred but not required).
- Experience working with volunteers and managing volunteer programs (preferred but not required).

**Abilities and Attributes:**

- Proficiency in providing trauma-informed client services.
- A willingness to approach client work with empathy, non-judgement, and confidentiality.
- Communicative team player who can manage competing and time-sensitive priorities.
- Compassion for incarcerated persons and their family members, and a demonstrated interest in criminal legal reform.
- Excellent writing and communication skills with an ability to be persuasive, kind, and clear for various audiences.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and other relevant electronic tools, or an ability to learn on the job.

**Benefits and Support:**

We are a new organization with a small team. Currently, (De)serving Life cannot offer health benefits for employees. As a young and growing organization, we are actively building our capacity to expand our comprehensive parole advocacy work across New Mexico, providing ample opportunities for professional growth and development. We value open conversations about the things that we need to succeed as a team. Candidates with additional questions about our employee support structures are invited to inquire during the interview process.

At (De)serving Life, we are committed to cultivating a fair and supportive culture that promotes sustainability and joy. This dedication is evident in our weekly staff meetings, where we celebrate achievements, our community gatherings, and our continuous efforts to create time and space for our team to collaborate and flourish together.

**Application Instructions:**

Please submit a resume and a cover letter explaining the ways in which you satisfy jobs and skills enumerated above. We also invite applicants to include in their letter why they want to advocate for people sentenced to life and long prison sentences in New Mexico. Please also include contact information for two professional or academic references materials should be submitted by email to [info@de-serving.org](mailto:info@de-serving.org). Applicants who submit cover letters that are not tailored to the position or the organization will not be considered. Applications will be accepted through Friday, August 23, 2024.

*(De)serving Life is committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming, and culturally responsive environment for all members of our staff, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. (De)serving Life does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or prior contact with the criminal justice system. We strongly encourage applications from people impacted by incarceration as well as from other traditionally underrepresented communities.*