

Local Legal Initiative - Oklahoma Attorney

The Organization: Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press attorneys provide pro bono legal representation, *amicus curiae* support, and other legal resources to protect First Amendment freedoms and the newsgathering rights of journalists.

The Program: In 2020, the Reporters Committee is launching its Local Legal Initiative (LLI) in Colorado, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee to provide pro bono legal support for local enterprise and investigative journalism.

The Position: The Reporters Committee seeks an Oklahoma-based attorney with at least three years of litigation experience as part of the LLI. Supported by a generous investment from the John L. and James S. Knight Foundation, this newly created two-year position will provide on-the-ground litigation and other legal support to journalists and news organizations across Oklahoma. Office space will be provided in Oklahoma City. Some travel within the state will be required.

LLI attorneys at the Reporters Committee will participate in all aspects of our First Amendment and media law work. They will represent news organizations and individual journalists in impact and defense litigation involving access to judicial records/proceedings, freedom of information, libel, and other newsgathering and First Amendment matters to foster enterprise and investigative reporting in Oklahoma. They will also facilitate public records and other media law trainings for journalists, and work with stakeholders across Oklahoma to increase visibility of the LLI and ensure the program is making a measurable impact on the ability of journalists to do investigative and enterprise journalism in the state.

This full-time position reports to the Legal Director and will last two years, with the potential for an extension. The LLI attorney will be the only Reporters Committee staff member in Oklahoma but will be a fully integrated part of RCFP's legal staff.

Key responsibilities include:

- Litigating impact cases involving access to court records/proceedings and issues arising under freedom of information laws, including the drafting of pleadings, motions and briefs and arguing motions;
- Handling administrative appeals under freedom of information laws and similar pre-litigation matters under applicable laws;
- Managing relationships with partners across Oklahoma;
- Conducting educational trainings for journalists and news organizations on media law topics.

Preferred qualifications:

- 3+ years of litigation experience with a law firm, nonprofit organization, or legal department of a news media company; admitted to practice in Oklahoma;
- Collaborative self-starter who is enthusiastic to help RCFP launch the LLI in Oklahoma and ensure its success;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Good judgment and the highest level of professional integrity;
- Prior experience handling matters involving Open Records Act requests, access to judicial records/proceedings, and subpoena/libel/defamation is preferred.

Assignment, supervision, and professional development:

- The LLI attorney will work as part of the legal team and will be supervised by the Legal Director.
- The LLI attorney will benefit from professional development and continuing education opportunities.

Salary will be based on location and experience.

Our generous benefit package should also be considered. For all regular full-time positions, the Reporters Committee offers:

- A competitive base salary with 2 weeks paid time off, plus Federal Holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- A retirement savings plan, including a 5% employer match from date of hire.
- Comprehensive employer paid insurance coverage, including medical, dental, and vision, life and accidental death, and disability.
- Ability to use pre-tax dollars for dependent care and commuting expenses.

The Reporters Committee is proud to be an equal opportunity employer open to all qualified applicants regardless of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age, citizenship, marital status, disability, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other legally protected status. We are building the foundation for long-term success and cultivating a collaborative and inclusive space and company culture.

Interested candidates should send a cover letter, resume, contact information for three references, and a short writing sample to Reporters Committee's Legal Director, Katie Townsend, at ktownsend@rcfp.org. Email subject line should state: Candidate for Oklahoma LLI Attorney. Applications that are incomplete will not be considered.