



Legal Fellow (Two-year term, full-time)

Bayou City Waterkeeper (BCWK) seeks an early-career lawyer to join our team as a full-time Legal Fellow for two years. The Fellow will help BCWK use the law to advance a community-driven vision of water justice for the greater Houston region. The Fellow is expected to start by 9/5.

Job Description

The Legal Fellow will report directly to our Legal Director and support our ongoing legal work and related advocacy, helping us use bold action to advance water, climate, and infrastructure justice across greater Houston. As one of two lawyers on staff, the Legal Fellow will represent BCWK in civil litigation and administrative proceedings, analyze legal strategies for BCWK and our partners, write public comments, help translate our legal work through communications and education, and represent BCWK in coalitions. The Legal Fellow will join our team for a two-year term. This is intended as an entry-level position, but lawyers with any level of experience are welcome to apply. The Fellow will receive hands-on legal work and related advocacy experience, as well as regular feedback, mentoring, and training.

About Bayou City Waterkeeper

Bayou City Waterkeeper is a water justice organization working across the [Lower Galveston Bay watershed](#) that encompasses greater Houston, for more than two decades. With law and science, we work with local communities to build power, fill gaps in regulatory enforcement, and push back against water injustices and irresponsible development. Our key program areas are Clean Water, Protecting Wetlands, and Just Climate Transitions. Learn more on [our website](#).

Our Values

Recognizing the complexities of our watershed, the challenges we face to protect our waters from the harms of urban development and industrial activities, and the importance of being responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, our work is guided and informed by five values:

- Interconnectivity: Collaborate across disciplines and create multiple ways to engage
- Fluidity: Embrace movement and adaptability in our work
- Bold action: Have hard conversations, disrupt dysfunctional systems, create new frameworks, bring together unconventional allies, and move data and research into action
- Justice and equality: Call out and act to undo inequities in our watershed
- Regeneration: Embrace water as a site for healing, joy, celebration, reflection, and growth

Responsibilities

- Manage day-to-day legal work relating to sewage and stormwater pollution, wastewater and stormwater permits, and other unpermitted pollution
- Research and analyze legal issues and help formulate strategies, set priorities, and investigate and enforce legal violations across greater Houston
- Respond to community members confronting water-related issues, connect them to resources and solutions, and help integrate their priorities into broader strategies
- In litigation, research legal issues and investigate facts; prepare Board litigation requests; identify and interview members and draft standing declarations; write briefs, motions, and memoranda; appear in court and argue; communicate with opposing counsel and partners; and engage in discovery and review documents
- Work with science and policy staff, partners, and community members to draft written and oral comments for permits, rulemakings, and environment review documents
- Create and deliver presentations related to our legal work to community groups, partners, and the Legal Circle in person and virtually and support legal-related communications
- Represent BCWK in local and regional partnerships
- File, track, review, and analyze information requests

Qualifications & Requirements

Candidates must have the following to be considered for the role:

- Juris Doctor by May 2023; and
- Admission to the State of Texas bar or plans to sit for the Texas bar exam in July 2023.

*Highly competitive candidates will also have some combination of:****

- Demonstrated interest in building litigation skills, through law school clinic experience, judicial clerkship, or litigation-oriented work, including internships or work as a paralegal
- Commitment to developing strong legal writing, analysis, and oral advocacy skills
- Comfort interpreting scientific and technical concepts
- Ability to translate legal and technical concepts to community members and partners
- Understanding of lawyers' role in community-centered advocacy and familiarity with movement lawyering, environmental justice, and just-climate-transitions concepts
- Commitment to deep listening to and with members of impacted communities and ability to build trust with and nurture equitable relationships with community members
- Commitment to supporting impacted communities
- Commitment to racial justice, anti-racism, and understanding of and commitment to using anti-racist lens in advancing justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Strong interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and enthusiasm for teamwork
- Self-motivation, creativity, organizational skills, and a diligent and efficient work ethic
- Spanish fluency
- A love for our region

****Research shows that women and people of color are more hesitant to apply for a job because they may not meet all of the qualifications listed. The candidate hired may not precisely meet all of these qualifications, but will show the desire and capacity to grow into the role and fit within our small, close-knit team. If you feel passionate about our efforts and believe you have the skills to contribute to the growth of our organization, we want to hear from you.*

Schedule/Location

We allow for flexible work schedules so our staff can be responsive to community needs and balance work and personal responsibilities. Our standard week is 36-40 hours. Occasionally, more than a regular week, including some evenings and weekends, will be necessary. Some local travel is required. Our staff meets in person once per week, and when necessary or beneficial, the Legal Fellow will be expected to appear in court, meet with partners, or attend other events in person (COVID permitting). Otherwise, our work is virtual. Given the place-based, community-centered nature of this work, the Legal Fellow must live within [the Lower Galveston Bay watershed](#).

Salary & Benefits

\$60,000. Benefits include: unlimited paid leave, paid holidays, and paid parental leave; subsidized group healthcare, dental, and vision coverage; BCWK-funded IRA contribution; and negotiable flex hours. This is a full-time, at-will, exempt position.

Application Instructions

For equal consideration, please send a resume and letter explaining your interest to careers@bayoucitywaterkeeper.org with subject line "BCWK Legal Fellow" by March 10, 2023. The interview process will include three stages. A final decision is expected by the end of May. The Fellow is expected to start by September 5 but may start as early as June 1, if they already have passed the Bar exam.

Our core values lead us to seek a broad range of perspectives and backgrounds to achieve our mission and maintain an inclusive environment where all staff are valued and respected. As an equal opportunity employer, we are committed to employment practices that ensure that employees and applicants for employment are given equal opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, religion, physical or mental disability, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information or any other factor that is not related to the position.