



Staff Attorney

Bayou City Waterkeeper (BCWK) seeks an entry-level lawyer to join our team as a full-time Staff Attorney. The Staff Attorney will support our ongoing legal, policy, and organizing work to address sources of water pollution within our region's [water justice zones](#), particularly within Baytown and along the Houston Ship Channel and the Texas coast. The deadline to apply is April 19.

Job Description

The Staff Attorney will implement our legal strategies to address industrial stormwater and wastewater pollution through improved permitting and enforcement alongside impacted communities, while also providing legal research support to our staff and our community partners.

This is a two-year position for new lawyers, or lawyers new to a public interest environmental practice, and may be renewed beyond two years depending on performance and mutual interest. Because this position is intended to help grow the very small bench of public interest environmental lawyers working in Houston, the benefits associated with this role include substantial investment in early-career development, including fully funded participation in nationally recognized trainings and conferences in the first six months of employment, as well as opportunities for mentoring and networking.

While our preference is for this position to start as soon as possible, candidates graduating in the spring of 2026 may start after taking the Texas State Bar exam this summer, and candidates completing other fellowships and clerkships, if selected, may start as late as September 2026. The Staff Attorney will report directly to Kristen Schlemmer, our Co-Executive Director leading legal strategies.

About Bayou City Waterkeeper

BCWK furthers justice, health, and safety for the waters and people of the greater Houston region through bold legal action, community science, and creative, grassroots policy. The law is an important tool in our work. Through an approach that draws on the impact-litigation and community lawyering frameworks, we use the law to advance community-identified priorities and bring community members into decision-making processes, hold polluters and leaders accountable, and create policy change.

Our Values

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

Represent BCWK in addressing industrial stormwater and wastewater pollution through legal mechanisms and mobilize community members and organizational partners to participate in legal action (50%)

- Research and analyze legal issues related to our ongoing work to address industrial pollution and related infrastructure issues across the organization
- Monitor, investigate, and help enforce legal violations
- Draft and submit public comments to proposed permits and regulatory action
- Educate, mobilize, and support community members in submitting public comments and participating in litigation processes
- Coordinate with technical experts and external legal partners
- In litigation, draft Board requests, identify and interview potential standing witnesses, draft standing declarations, and participate as a member of our litigation teams alongside our Co-Executive Director and external partners
- Draft blog posts and media talking points and coordinate with staff to amplify legal work through social media

Advance a community lawyering approach by educating community members, organizational partners, and staff (30%):

- Provide internal education to staff on legal issues, and research and analyze legal issues related to our ongoing work to address water pollution and related infrastructure issues across the organization
- Provide resources and information to community members and groups confronting industrial stormwater and wastewater pollution and related infrastructure injustices
- Give presentations to and share information with our staff and coalition and community partners on how to use legal tools to address industrial stormwater and wastewater pollution
- Work closely with organizers to build relationships with Baytown residents
- Collaborate with BCWK's Community Research Action Network (CRANe), staff, and partners to identify actionable solutions that can be advanced through legal processes

Support hiring and supervision of legal interns (20%)

- Support hiring legal interns for summer and, as needed, spring and fall
- Coordinate with staff and partners to identify and assign legal research assignments
- Give constructive feedback to assignments
- Participate in career panels and hiring programs, if needed

Qualifications & Requirements

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

- Juris Doctor degree and admission in good standing to the State of Texas bar, or if graduating in the Spring of 2026, plans to sit for the Texas State bar exam in the Summer of 2026.
- Legal writing, research, and analytical skills.
- Results-orientation, with a track record of achievement and producing results (rather than getting immersed in process) and persevering despite obstacles.
- Project management skills: ability to stay on top of multiple projects, plan backwards, anticipate obstacles, identify and involve stakeholders appropriately, and use resources wisely.

- Demonstrated interest in building litigation and/or administrative advocacy skills, through clinic experience, judicial clerkship, or litigation-oriented work, including post-graduate work, internships, or work as a paralegal or similar role.
- Demonstrated commitment to centering community in advocacy, public interest work, and organizing for change.
- Experience or demonstrated commitment to working with diverse members of communities directly impacted by pollution or other forms of injustice.
- Ability and desire to contribute to the creation of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work culture that encourages and celebrates differences.
- High level of emotional intelligence, excellent interpersonal skills, and self-awareness.
- Residence in [the Lower Galveston Bay watershed](#) or plans to relocate.
- An appreciation for the greater Houston region and a strong motivation to improve the well-being and health of our region's communities and waterbodies.
- Alignment with our organizational values.

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

- At least one year of experience practicing law, with a litigation, environmental, or administrative law focus.
- At least two years of full-time work experience preceding law school.
- Familiarity with movement and community lawyering, environmental justice, and just transitions concepts.
- Working understanding of federal environmental laws, especially the Clean Water Act, Administrative Procedure Act, and National Environmental Policy Act.
- Oral advocacy experience.
- Comfort interpreting scientific and technical concepts, developing relationships with experts, and learning what you do not know.
- Ability to translate legal and technical concepts to community members and partners.
- Organizing mindset, with the ability to listen to, build trust with, and nurture equitable relationships with community members.
- Commitment to racial justice, anti-racism, and understanding of and commitment to using anti-racist lens in advancing justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility values.
- Personal connections to the greater Houston region that motivate them to work here.

****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 hours. Overtime and work during evenings and weekends will be necessary, and comp time is encouraged to offset hours worked over standard time. Some local travel is required, and access to a reliable car is necessary for this work; mileage will be reimbursed. Our staff meets in person at least once per week, and the Staff Attorney will be expected to meet in person with partners and attend other events in person. Otherwise, our work is virtual. Given the place-based, community-centered nature of this work, the Staff Attorney must live within [the Lower Galveston Bay watershed](#) encompassing the greater Houston region.

Salary & Benefits

\$70,000 annual salary. Benefits include:

- unlimited paid time off;
- paid holidays, including two weeks at the end of the year;
- paid parental leave;
- negotiable flex hours;
- subsidized group healthcare, dental, and vision coverage;
- BCWK-funded IRA contribution;
- an annual work-from-home budget; and
- payment for Texas bar membership and other legal membership fees related to our work.

The person hired for this position may also receive up to \$2,000 in reimbursement for moving expenses if they are relocating from a city outside of the greater Houston region. This is a full-time, at-will, exempt position.

Professional Development

In addition to the professional development budget offered to all staff to support their growth. This position will receive additional professional development investment in the first six months of employment, including the option to participate in a NITA [litigation skills workshop](#), Management Center [Foundations](#) training, Compasspoint [Conflict Resolution](#) and [Facilitation Skills](#) trainings, and subject matter training at the annual Texas Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.

Application Instructions

For priority consideration, please send (1) a resume and (2) a letter explaining your interest and key qualifications for the position not already reflected on your resume to careers@bayoucitywaterkeeper.org with the subject line "BCWK Staff Attorney" by April 19, 2026. The interview process will include at least two stages, and applicants who move to the second round will be asked for an original writing sample. Finalists for the position will be asked to provide three professional references.

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.