Bronx Legal Services seeks experienced advocates, who can be paralegals or social workers, to join our Public Benefits Unit. We are expanding as a result of a new grant, called NYCBenefits, which has an overarching goal of expanding access to public benefits for low-income people across NYC.

**Our Organization:**

Bronx Legal Services, the largest provider of free civil legal services in the borough, is part of Legal Services NYC’s network of local programs throughout New York City. Our mission is to advance society’s promise to its most vulnerable members: that they are entitled to equal access to our legal system. For over 50 years, we have provided civil legal services that help our clients meet their essential needs and have challenged the systemic injustices that keep them poor.

**The Public Benefits Unit:**

Our Public Benefits Unit (PBU) fights to retain, obtain, or increase critical public benefits, including cash public assistance, SNAP/Food Stamps, WIC, HASA benefits, and rent subsidies (such as FHEPS and CityFHEPS). We also specialize in health law issues, helping people obtain or retain public health insurance and services such as Medicare, Medicaid, and long-term care. Our PBU also has a medical-legal partnership with Urban Health Plan. Our talented team of advocates includes 24 people.

**The Opportunity:**

We are seeking experienced advocates to join our PBU as part of our new NYCBenefits project. The primary role of advocates will be providing technical assistance to a group of community-based organizations (CBOs); these CBOs, also funded by the NYCBenefits grant, will either begin or expand projects to enroll people in public benefits.

The ambit of public benefits envisioned by this initiative includes SSI, SSDI, Social Security survivors’ benefits, cash assistance, SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, Medicare, HEAP, the Affordable Connectivity Program, the Energy Affordability Program, housing-related benefits, and tax credits (like the Earned Income Tax Credit), among other benefits.

We are looking for advocates with significant experience in public benefits. We will be reviewing all candidates who apply, with particular attention to people with paralegal and social work backgrounds. If hired, the advocate would have a job title of either paralegal or social worker, depending on education and background.

Our ideal candidate is a seasoned public benefits advocate with exceptional organizational skills who is an excellent educator/coach/trainer and enthusiastic about our ability to create change when collaborating with community groups, clients, CBOs, city agencies, and other players.

**Paralegal Role:**

Paralegals would be trouble-shooting, training, and providing help to CBOs that are learning new benefits applications and eligibility rules; attending and leading group meetings; and conducting community outreach, among other responsibilities.

**Social Work Role:**

In addition to these duties, social workers would review and assess reports and evaluations or data concerning how people and communities access benefits; supervise graduate level social work students; provide social services needs assessments; and develop, conduct, and participate in outreach, education, and training with community groups and agencies, among other things. Social worker applicants must have a Masters of Social Work (or equivalent) and be licensed to practice social work in NYS. Occasional evening and weekend outreach will be necessary.

**Experience & Qualifications:**

Qualifications include:

- A demonstrated passion for social justice and a commitment to working with low-income communities and communities of color to advance equity;
- Great time management skills and ability to juggle several different urgent priorities at the same time;
- A minimum of three years’ experience in multiple kinds of public benefits, as defined above, including at least two years’ experience outside of housing-related benefits;
- Deep knowledge of most public benefits, as defined above, with particular expertise in application processes and eligibility rules;
- An excellent collaborator who enjoys working with, and being a part of, a team;
- Patience with, and empathy for, our clients, colleagues, and agency partners, combined with an understanding of boundary setting, to ensure longevity in role;
- Ability to adapt to change and be flexible;
Fluency or proficiency in Spanish or another language commonly spoken by NYC residents is strongly preferred;
Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) and understanding of the role DEIB plays in access to, laws around, and administration of public benefits;
Superlative communication skills grounded in relationship-building and empathy;
An aptitude for issue-spotting and triage, particularly with identifying issues quickly and accurately;
An understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner/domestic violence and trafficking, as well as the effects abuse, crime, and trauma have on individuals and communities;
An aptitude for working with survivors of crime, noncitizens, older persons, and people with disabilities;
An ability to address common pain points experienced by clients, CBOs, and other partners early by looking at root of problem rather than only addressing symptoms;
Good writing skills;
Excellent organizational skills and strong facility with numbers; and
Experience working with low-income people

Health Recommendation

All employees are strongly encouraged to continue to receive and maintain up-to-date Covid-19 vaccinations unless they are unable to for medical or religious reasons.

How to Apply

To apply for the position, send a cover letter, resume, names of three references, and two recent writing samples via e-mail to:

Bronx-BenefitsHiring@lsnyc.org

The e-mail should include "Bronx NYCBenefits Advocate Position" in the subject line.

Only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted. No telephone calls.

Bronx Legal Services is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. People of color, women, people with disabilities, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and people over age 40 are all welcomed and encouraged to apply.

Salary Ranges (dependent on years' experience):

- **MSW-level candidates:** $61,725 - $118,008
  - 1-10 years: $61,725 - $83,645
  - 11-20 years: $85,755 - $102,920
  - 21-35 years: $108,070 - $118,008
- **Paralegal-level candidates:** $50,991 - $82,266
  - 1-10 years: $50,991 - $62,993
  - 11-20 years: $64,004 - $72,651
  - 21-35 years: $75,404 - $82,266