

Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative (HILSC) Job Description

Job Title: Executive Director
Reports to: HILSC Executive Committee
FLSA Status: Contract
Prepared by/Date: Human Resources Task Force/August 2015

Mission: To create a coordinated network of effective and efficient services to assist low-income immigrants' access to the information and legal representation that allows them to make choices in their own best interest.

Origins of the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

The framework for the Collaborative was born in February 2013 at the Greater Houston Grantmakers Forum, which was held at the United Way and focused on immigration. The discussion was influenced by the comprehensive immigration reform bill working its way through the US Congress during that time. Houston's immigration legal services community was anticipating a significant increase in the number of immigrants seeking legal status and citizenship as a result of the legislation and was interested in partnering with funders to increase capacity. The funder collaborative, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigration and Refugees (GCIR), was also in attendance. GCIR discussed ways that other communities around the nation were mobilizing around improving quality and quantity of immigration-related services in the face of increasing need. Two key issues emerged from that early meeting: the limited capacity of organizations to help low-income immigrant communities and the limited coordination of services among the service providers.

Following that initial meeting, local non-profits and funders continued to meet to discuss ways that Houston could scale up its existing network of immigration service providers, particularly within the legal services community. Even as the comprehensive reform bill failed to materialize in Congress, the community of Houston area stakeholders felt that it was vital to work towards increased capacity and coordination among its service providers.

Increasing capacity remains urgent, particularly because of the surge of unaccompanied immigrant children from Central America in need of legal services throughout 2014. In addition, it is widely expected that President Obama will take executive action to offer an administrative relief program to new groups of immigrants. This executive action is expected to be similar to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program of 2012, which provides relief from deportation, along with work authorization for an estimated 1.76 million young immigrants in the United States.

By early 2014, the Collaborative had become an aligned affiliation of stakeholders, including 18 service providers, private businesses, and funders (Houston Endowment, Simmons Foundation, Texas Access to Justice Foundation, and the Greater Houston Community Foundation). In February, the Collaborative launched its Phase 1, which would create a facilitator-guided community plan to meet the growing needs of low-income immigrants. This planning process, funded by The Simmons Foundation and the Houston Endowment through a pooled fund at the Greater Houston Community Foundation, has:

- Mapped the community's current capacities for providing immigration services to low-income individuals;
- Identified gaps in services; and
- Developed a plan of action so that the collaborative members can respond in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

The Collaborative has also contracted with the Migration Policy Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based non-partisan research institute, to publish an issue brief that provides a concise, high-level overview of Houston's immigrant and refugee population. MPI researchers Randy Capps and Michael Fix presented their findings to Houston area funders and Collaborative members on September 10, 2014. This study was critical to helping the Collaborative understand the scope of the legal services needs in the Houston area.

The Collaborative formed an Executive Committee to provide leadership and continuity through monthly meetings. Three strategic taskforces also began meeting regularly in 2014, each focused on a key area of concern: legal services capacity, access to services, and communications. These priority areas form the backbone for this Community Plan and specific goals and actions have been developed within these three areas. Phase 2 of the Collaborative is the implementation phase of the Community Plan.

As of the writing of this plan, a wide variety of organizations including members of the legal, non-profit, private, and funding sectors have been actively engaged. These stakeholders have included:

- **Legal Services Stakeholders:** Fort Bend Lawyers CARE; Houston Bar Association; Houston Volunteer Lawyers Program; Lone Star Legal Aid; South Texas College of Law; University of Houston Law Center; F Valdez Law PC
- **Non-Profit Stakeholders:** American Immigration Lawyers Association – Houston Chapter; Boat People SOS - Houston Branch; Bonding Against Adversity; Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; Children at Risk; Chinese Community Center; DAYA; Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services (ECHOS); Ethiopian Community Organization in Houston; Human Rights First; Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston; Kids in Need of Defense (KIND); Memorial Assistance Ministries; NALEO; Neighborhood Centers, Inc.; Own the Dream; Somali Bantu Community of Greater Houston; Tahirih Justice Center; The Metropolitan Organization of Houston; United Way, YMCA International Services
- **Funder Stakeholders:** Houston Endowment, Simmons Foundation, Greater Houston Community Foundation, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, Texas Access to Justice Foundation
- **Private Stakeholders:** Greater Houston Partnership

Position Summary: Responsible for providing strategic leadership in conducting the business of HILSC and responsible for all matters pertaining to the operation of HILSC. Perform all duties in a manner consistent with the high standards of the nonprofit community. Work with the Executive Committee (EC) to implement the HILSC Community Plan as well as continue to establish long-range goals, strategies, plans and policies. The plan document may be found at <http://www.citizenshipcorner.org>.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: THE STATEMENTS BELOW ARE INTENDED TO DESCRIBE THE GENERAL NATURE AND LEVEL OF WORK BEING PERFORMED BY INDIVIDUAL(S) ASSIGNED TO THIS POSITION. THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF ALL RESPONSIBILITIES, DUTIES AND SKILLS REQUIRED OF PERSONNEL SO CLASSIFIED IN THIS POSITION. THE POSITION DESCRIPTION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY HILSC AS THE NEEDS OF HILSC AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION CHANGE.

Visionary Leadership Responsibilities:

- Provide executive level leadership in setting the vision and strategic planning for HILSC
- Develop and implement the organization's strategic initiatives, goals and long-range plans with Executive Committee, staff and membership
- Provide inspiration, motivation and incentive for members to achieve excellence for the community through collaboration, information sharing, and capacity-building initiatives
- Create an environment in which the activities of HILSC reflect accepted best practices for collaboratives, including overseeing the procedure for accepting and vetting new members
- Represent and serve as spokesperson for HILSC to the general public and non-profit community and provide leadership and a convening role in the community
- Participate in appropriate local, regional, and national conferences, events and workshops which relate to the Collaborative's growth and impact in the community
- Implement HILSC's Community Plan and ensure that it achieves the mission and vision of the Collaborative
- Identify successful organizations for alliance-building and learning purposes
- Build and maintain knowledge about community and national issues and trends that have impact on the work of HILSC, and share this knowledge with the EC
- Collect and maintain data and other information about members' activities and operations

Administrative Responsibilities:

- Supervise the day-to-day operations of HILSC
- Hire, train, and supervise staff or contractors
- Provide ongoing supervision and mentoring of staff, including immigration attorney advisor, and conduct periodic performance reviews (as needed)
- Plan and facilitate Executive Committee and General Membership meetings in collaboration with the Chair and/or other members of the EC
- Monitor organizational practices and functions to ensure consistency with members' intent
- Monitor grants received for proper compliance, reporting and alignment with donor intent
- Maintain official records and documents, and ensure compliance with federal, state and local regulations
- Act as the liaison between the Executive Committee and the fiscal agent, bank custodian, accountant, auditor, and other contracted service providers
- Develop and monitor an annual budget that is within reasonable and necessary limits, as determined by the IRS
- Maintain regular communication with the EC
- Carry out policies established by the EC
- Manage/oversee the production and dissemination of HILSC publications, website, Annual Report, etc., before distribution to HILSC members or to the general public

Fundraising Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement funding strategies with the EC, including donor development
- Periodically review the long-range strategic plan and recommend any adjustments or changes to the EC

Qualifications:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Experience, Competencies and Education:

- An experienced leader with success in collaborative leadership demonstrated by achieving organizational targets and goals-
- An energetic, forward-thinking and creative individual with high ethical standards and an appropriate professional image
- A strategic visionary with sound technical skills, analytical ability, good judgment and strong operational focus
- An intelligent and articulate individual who can relate to people at all levels of an organization and possesses excellent communication skills
- A good educator who is trustworthy and willing to share information and serve as a mentor
- A decisive individual who possesses a “big-picture” perspective and is well versed in nonprofit organizations
- Bachelor’s degree or equivalent; or ten to fifteen years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience. Master’s or advanced degree preferred.

Abilities:

- Make sound judgments
- Read, analyze and interpret complex documents
- Respond effectively to the most sensitive inquiries or complaints
- Make effective and persuasive speeches and presentations on controversial or complex topics to the EC and outside institutions with which the Collaborative depends upon for support and strategic alliances
- Demonstrates principles of good communication and interpersonal skills
- Lead and direct a team of professional associates
- Facilitate collaborative success while promoting member agency work

Knowledge:

- Modern nonprofit management principles, methods, practices, and techniques, as well as contemporary leadership theory and techniques
- Pertinent federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations
- Good communication and interpersonal skills