



The Center for Children's Advocacy Seeks Executive Director

About The Center for Children's Advocacy

The Center for Children's Advocacy's ([CCA's](#)) vision is a Connecticut where all children and youth have their educational, health and basic needs met, and receive the services and supports they need to thrive and reach their full potential. To protect and promote the legal rights of Connecticut's low-income children and youth, CCA legal staff engage in three strategies: individual client representation; legal rights training for youth, parents, and professionals; and advocacy for systemic reform within the juvenile justice, education, child welfare, homeless, health care and court systems.

CCA has a reputation for excellence, credibility, and independence of externally imposed restrictions. Our staff fight hard *alongside* our clients, are well prepared, and bring experience and legal expertise to level the playing field for those who have less power or are unable to speak for themselves. Our staff are embedded inside systems to create change and we often work with partners and create networks to improve the lives of children. Some highlights of our year of advocacy:

- We provided over 1,000 children and youth, in all eight counties in Connecticut, with legal information and legal services to protect their rights and help them get what they needed to thrive.
- Nearly 9,000 children who were undocumented were able to enroll in HUSKY health insurance this year, due to the major multiyear advocacy effort we initiated to expand HUSKY.
- Through legislative action, more than 600 foster youth who have turned 18 and remain in foster care, will continue to have attorneys for their DCF cases.

Our broad array of initiatives include:

Advancing Racial Justice: Advocacy for racial justice runs through all CCA's work. CCA confronts systemic policies and practices that contribute to racial and ethnic disparities in education, health and juvenile justice involvement, that also impact the economic, environmental, and social conditions in which children and youth of color live. CCA represents children and youth impacted by inequitable systems, while also analyzing systemic problems with a racial justice lens and leading advocacy efforts directly targeting systemic racial injustices.

Reducing Juvenile and Criminal Justice Involvement: CCA attorneys represent youth at risk of being drawn deep into the juvenile justice system, helping them access appropriate educational services and addressing obstacles to success to break the cycle of school failure and justice system involvement. CCA's unique reentry legal services reach out to incarcerated youth to intervene early to prevent reentry problems and represented youth throughout their reentry.

Restorative Justice: CCA leads a transformative statewide program that is replacing punitive behavior management systems used in youth facilities with restorative justice practices. CCA is working with 17 youth facilities to implement restorative justice practices, facilitating restorative justice training and coaching staff on implementing restorative practices.

Advancing Health Equity: CCA attorneys fight to improve children’s health with legal services addressing health-harming conditions. At CCA’s Medical-Legal Partnerships at health care sites in New Haven and Hartford, CCA attorneys work with health care providers to address health-harming social and environmental conditions and enforce children’s rights to appropriate services.

Strengthening Child Welfare: CCA has long been a leading source of high quality holistic legal representation for children and youth who are alleged to have been abused or neglected and are involved with the state Department of Children and Families. CCA’s legal representation enforces children and youths’ legal rights in all areas of their lives impacted by their traumatic experiences – education, physical and mental health care, and access to family services.

Youth Leadership in Systemic Reform: CCA’s Speak Up group is an assembly of youth leaders with lived experience who advocate for systemic change to benefit their communities. CCA teaches the youth about systemic issues and advocacy strategies and skills and supports them as they develop and implement campaigns for systemic reform.

Reducing Youth Homelessness: CCA reaches youth through our innovative Mobile Legal Office and provides youth with legal services and help with emergency basic needs directly on site.

Protecting and Supporting Immigrant Children and Youth: CCA is Connecticut’s primary source of free legal representation in matters regarding Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), which allows children to remain safely in the U.S. and puts them on the path to a Green Card. We also train and support pro bono attorneys and volunteers to increase representation in state courts of undocumented children and youth in SIJS cases.

Promoting Educational Equity: CCA attorneys partner with agencies in some of Connecticut’s most vulnerable communities to reach families whose children do not receive the educational services to which they are legally entitled. CCA addresses issues including special education, rights of students with disabilities, bullying, overly punitive school suspensions and expulsions, and educational rights of homeless youth. CCA also has a legal clinic inside Harding High School in Bridgeport that reaches adolescents who need legal services to help them attend school and learn.

CCA punches above its weight. We have a staff of 27, including attorneys, paralegals and other program staff, and development, communications, finance, and other back-office staff. CCA’s annual budget is slightly more than \$3 million. CCA is overseen by a 17-member Board of Directors and 11 professionals serve on an Advisory Board. Our offices are in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven.

Opportunity Going Forward

CCA was founded in 1997 by long-time civil rights attorney Martha Stone. Attorney Stone is shifting to the newly created role of Special Counsel. Her work will provide CCA with crucial capacity around innovative legal approaches to entrenched systemic problems. The new Executive Director will have the opportunity to build on her legacy and take CCA into the next phase of growth and sustainability.

Priorities for the new Executive Director are:

- With the Board and staff, solidify CCA’s strategy and priorities for the future
- Establish a growth strategy that aligns and increases funding and programs to support CCA’s current and future needs.

- Facilitate a smooth leadership transition from a highly influential founder and actively cultivate and enhance connections with the community, partners, and funders, ensuring a seamless continuation of established relationships.
- Inspire, support, and lead a talented, self-motivated staff to continue to achieve excellence in legal services and systemic change.
- Spend dedicated time to raising the funds needed to sustain an adequate organizational infrastructure and CCA's growing scope of work.
- Champion the racial justice work of CCA and ensure that DEIB principles are evident internally in the workplace and impact external advocacy strategies.

Profile of the Ideal Candidate

The next ED of CCA will be a seasoned organizational leader with significant experience with organizational growth and sustainability, and with a demonstrated commitment to fighting for children's legal and civil rights. The following capabilities are sought:

A Visionary and Strategic Executive

- Progressive leadership experience in the legal, policy, advocacy, or related fields
- Been at the forefront of addressing societal issues related to legal advocacy or representation
- Proven success in bringing new ideas, bold thinking, and growth strategies to an organization
- Demonstrated ability to lead and execute a strategic organizational vision and plan
- Skilled at championing a vision to leverage funding, partnerships, and public awareness
- Demonstrated success in integrating social justice and equity principles into overall organizational strategy

A Seasoned Organizational Leader

- Business acumen in operations, management, and governance leadership
- Financial acumen necessary to create and manage a budget, financial reporting, and planning
- A track record of successful fundraising across all areas of development
- Agile and entrepreneurial, and thrives in an environment of change
- A bridge-builder who fosters collaborative relationships with staff, community, and policy partners
- Skilled in making thoughtful and brave decisions in a respectful manner

A Powerful Communicator

- Charisma and gravitas to lead a preeminent nonprofit law firm, engendering the respect, rapport, and credibility of peers, funders, and policymakers
- A public spokesperson with strong oral, written, and storytelling skills, and the ability to leverage the media
- Politically savvy and able to navigate in complex political, legal, and social environments

An Authentic and Engaging Leader

- Passion for and commitment to the mission of CCA and the children and youth it serves and represents
- Is warm, humble, and accessible with the aptitude to motivate, coach, and respect staff
- A confidence builder across a diverse group of stakeholders
- Demonstrated appreciation for the contribution of the talents of others, including a founder
- Partner to the Board of Directors to expand its impact on behalf of the organization

- Proven champion of racial and social equity and committed to developing a welcoming, collaborative, diverse, and inclusive work culture and climate

Credentials and Requirements

- 10+ years of relevant senior leadership experience
- Law degree required with experience matching CAA's programming preferred
- To be highly visible where CCA has office locations
- Statewide travel will be necessary and occasional evening and weekend work may be required.

Compensation and Benefits:

CCA is an at-will employer. This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position. The salary is competitive with relevant experience, within the framework of the organization's annual operating budget, and in the approximate range of \$130,000-150,000. CCA offers a comprehensive benefits package: health/dental insurance, short and long term disability insurance, life insurance, participation in Health Care and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Arrangements and workers' compensation insurance; 10 days sick leave annually; 25 days of paid time off; and 13 paid holidays.

Application Process and Additional Information

CCA is an equal opportunity employer. CCA recruits, hires, trains, and promotes employees according to their individual qualifications, ability, and experience without regard to age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, mental, or physical disability or veteran status or any other status protected by state or federal law.

CCA views diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence as vital guiding principles in its work. CCA welcomes and encourages applications from people of color, Indigenous persons, members of the LGBTQ community, persons with disabilities and others who may contribute to the diversity of the organization and reflect the diversity of the communities CCA serves.

Candidates must include a resume and a cover letter, both in PDF format, which describe how qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of CCA. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultant, Nancy Jackson. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to Nancy at: njackson@eostransitions.com.