JOB ANNOUNCEMENT – October 14, 2022

Human Rights Investigator

The Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR) invites applications for a Human Rights Investigator to join its Impact Litigation Unit (ILU).

About SCHR
The Southern Center for Human Rights is working for equality, dignity, and justice for people impacted by the criminal legal system in the Deep South. SCHR fights for a world free from mass incarceration, the death penalty, the criminalization of poverty, and racial injustice.

Over our forty-six-year history, SCHR has litigated precedent setting cases in the South, in hostile climates, against all odds. SCHR has forced county and state governments to make significant improvements in prisons and jails to reduce overcrowding, provide adequate medical and mental health care, and abate violence and abuse. We have argued and won five death penalty cases at the US Supreme Court, four of which challenged profound race discrimination in capital trials. Our combined litigation and policy advocacy helped bring about the creation of a statewide public defender system in Georgia. For more information about SCHR, see our website at www.schr.org.

About the Position
The Impact Litigation Unit (ILU) challenges unconstitutional practices of the criminal legal system through federal and state litigation in Alabama and Georgia. Over the last decade, the ILU’s work has included cases on behalf of people who are poor and are being denied attorneys for their criminal cases, people who have faced the criminalization of poverty and debtors’ prison practices, incarcerated people who are subject to unacceptably high levels of violence, overcrowding, or other barbaric conditions such as solitary confinement, people who have been harmed by police, people who are receiving inadequate legal representation from their appointed counsel in criminal cases, people who are serving extreme prison sentences, and people detained in jails with harmful COVID-19 practices. Many ILU actions represent classes of people, though the ILU does take on individual representation from time to time. Our clients frequently have multiple interlocking identities that elevate their risk of discrimination and abuse related to their race, religion, LGBTQ identity, mental health challenges, physical and developmental disabilities, and histories of trauma.

The job of the Investigator is to work with attorneys to investigate allegations of systemic abuse or neglect by correctional officials, courts, and other actors in the criminal legal system, advocate for people experiencing harm in the system, and to help build cases demanding fairness and more humane treatment.

Key Responsibilities
Responsibilities of the Investigator include:

- Conducting confidential interviews of people in prisons, jails, and wherever else they are encountering the criminal legal system, and documenting this information in a timely and comprehensive fashion;
- Advocating for people under correctional control, and helping people advocate for themselves;
- Locating and interviewing potential plaintiffs and/or witnesses for our cases;
- Observing and documenting court proceedings and identifying people to interview;
- Requesting and obtaining public and confidential records, and maintaining these records in an organized manner;
- Conducting litigation-related research, and investigating facts using a variety of sources, including news media, social media, Pacer, Accurint, documents available only in print, etc.;
- Developing trusting relationships with SCHR clients and their families;
- Responding to discreet requests for assistance from non-clients;
• Organizing large amounts of paper and digital records by creating summaries, charts, data analysis, and other means for use by attorneys and experts;
• Assisting in preparing documents for court hearings and for filing in cases; and
• Possibly testifying in court in SCHR’s cases.

Qualifications & Experience
SCHR seeks applicants who are highly motivated, detail-oriented, well-organized, communicate well with others, have strong writing skills, and have a deep commitment to SCHR’s work. The candidate should be both a strong team player and able to take initiative and work independently. The ideal candidate is someone who has prior employment or volunteer experience with under-served communities. A willingness to venture into new situations and tenacity are also essential characteristics.

Applicants must be:
• willing to travel weekly by car in Georgia, Alabama, and elsewhere, and spend substantial time interviewing people in correctional facilities;
• willing to work outside of 9-to-5 hours;
• trustworthy with confidential information;
• open to constructive feedback on their work from colleagues;
• communicative with their teams, clients, and witnesses;
• dedicated to building strong relationships with their clients as people;
• committed to serving financially disadvantaged communities and/or other communities targeted by the criminal legal system; and
• dedicated to uprooting anti-Black racism and working to advance SCHR’s commitment to antiracism.

A driver’s license is required. Fluency in Spanish, or a background in organizing, journalism, or mental health will be helpful, but is not required. People with direct personal or familial experience with the criminal legal system are deeply welcomed to apply.

Commitment and Compensation
SCHR seeks a commitment of at least three years. Start date is negotiable, but early January would be preferred. Salary is commensurate with experience, within SCHR’s modest, public interest salary range of $48,000 - $65,000. SCHR offers an excellent, 100% premium paid benefits package including medical, dental, vision care, and life insurance. Additional benefits include modest stipends for transportation and wellness, access to a flexible spending account, and childcare assistance (if eligible).

COVID-19 logistics
SCHR’s office, located in downtown Atlanta, is open. Most staff members are working hybrid schedules and much of the investigator position requires conducting visits and interviews in person. SCHR provides PPE for employees and has a mandatory safety protocol. Employees must be fully vaccinated.

TO APPLY:
Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Those who are interested are encouraged to apply immediately. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE. Email careers@schr.org with the following:
• Statement in the subject line of the e-mail that you are applying for the Investigator position;
• Letter of interest and resume;
• Writing sample (could be an article for a blog, academic paper, policy brief or whatever shows your style and voice); and
• Contact information for three references.

The Southern Center for Human Rights is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, which welcomes qualified applicants of all races, ethnicities, genders, gender-identities, sexual orientations, abilities, nationalities, military status, as well as those who have personal experience with the criminal legal system.