



1701 Rhode Island Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20036
www.defendstudents.org

National Student Legal Defense Network *Oversight Counsel*

The National Student Legal Defense Network (“Student Defense”) is a non-profit organization that uses litigation and advocacy to advance students’ rights to educational opportunity and to ensure that higher education provides a launching point for economic mobility. Through our work, we aim to ensure robust consumer protections for students and to curb abusive and disruptive practices across higher education. Since launching seven years ago, we have developed a substantial track record of success in both trial and appellate courts, winning tangible relief for students and student loan borrowers. Simultaneously, we have developed and promoted a policy agenda leading to substantial student debt relief for hundreds of thousands of individuals and robust consumer protections across higher education. Our work has achieved structural changes to curb fraud and misrepresentations to students, combat reverse redlining practices that target students of color, and obtain relief for defrauded student loan borrowers. Student Defense is also working with state and federal agencies and organizations to find new ways to streamline student access to public benefits.

Position Summary

Institutional capacity and accountability are essential elements of a healthy democracy. We harness the Freedom of Information Act and other public records laws to ensure government transparency on issues that impact students and to hold federal agencies accountable for upholding the rule of law.

The role of the Oversight Counsel is to manage the organization’s oversight and democracy related work. This includes drafting FOIA requests and state open records laws, leading litigation under FOIA (and state open records law), and working with partner organizations, Congressional offices, and state officials to ensure that systems of government are effectively serving students and student loan borrowers. We anticipate that Oversight Counsel will also participate in related administrative law litigation.

The ideal individual will be creative, mission driven, and interested in government transparency, accountability, and higher education. We seek someone with at least four years of litigation experience who can, with appropriate supervision, develop and manage litigation. The individual should be detail oriented, very well organized, and be willing to assist on other litigation the organization is involved in, as time permits.

To apply: please send an email with a cover letter, a resume, and three references to careers@defendstudents.org.

Essential Responsibilities

- Overseeing the Organization's transparency work, which includes developing and managing (with the Paralegal and Legal Assistant) all Freedom of Information Act requests and interactions with federal agencies regarding those requests;
- Reviewing all materials obtained via public records requests, and strategizing with the organizational leadership about how to best use materials to impact public policy;
- Litigating cases under the Freedom of Information Act and sunshine laws;
- Working with Congressional staff, state Attorney General offices, and other state agencies to promote transparency and accountability across higher education
- Drafting policy reports;
- Playing a key role in litigation brought under the Administrative Procedure Act, as well as in other cases brought by the Organization.

Desired Qualifications

- A law degree and admission to either the District of Columbia Bar *or* one other state with eligibility to become a member of the bar of the District of Columbia within one year;
- At least 4-7 years litigation experience, including litigation under FOIA and the Administrative Procedure Act;
- Experience with FOIA requests, as well as the workings of Congressional investigations, the Office of the Special Counsel, and/or an Office of the Inspector General;
- Strong legal research, writing, and communication skills and a high-level of attention to detail in a fast-paced work environment;
- An interest in consumer protection and/or administrative law, as well as higher education policy, with an ability to think innovatively about how to approach old and new challenges in this space;
- Exemplary organizational and interpersonal skills and the ability to work independently and adapt in a flexible, start-up environment; *and*
- A commitment to Student Defense's mission, purpose, and values.

Organizational Relationships

This role reports to the Vice President and Chief Counsel. The individual will regularly work with other team members, including the President and Director of Litigation. There will also likely be opportunities to work with individuals at other organizations and law firms.

Additional Information

This role is a full-time exempt role; residency in the Washington D.C. area is preferred.

Salary is between \$90,000 and \$120,000, commensurate with experience. Student Defense offers excellent benefits, including healthcare, and a pre-tax retirement match.

Student Defense is a hybrid organization with an office located in downtown Washington, D.C. In-office days are encouraged for team-building and collaboration, but are not mandated by the organization. Student Defense occasionally holds team retreats in Washington, D.C. where in-person attendance is required.

The National Student Legal Defense Network is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer, and encourages applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability or veteran status, or to other non-work-related factors.