

Director of Legal, Project Network (Staff Attorney)

Earth Island Institute description

Earth Island Institute is a nonprofit environmental organization that has been at the forefront of efforts to protect the planet and its inhabitants for more than forty years. Earth Island supports grassroots activists through a powerful network of about 80 projects working in the United States and around the world. Earth Island's projects safeguard forests, oceans, and wildlife; support youth, women's environmental leadership, and historically-excluded communities; respond to climate change; and advance environmental justice, sustainability, and resilience. Earth Island further inspires action through the New Leaders Initiative and its annual Brower Youth Awards, which provides youth leaders with recognition and mentoring; Earth Island Journal, which provides unparalleled coverage of global environmental news and perspectives; and Earth Island Advocates, which uses the law to strengthen environmental protections. For more information, please visit earthisland.org.

Position overview

The staff attorney will directly support the legal needs of Earth Island's fiscally-sponsored projects, as well as contribute to Earth Island's ambitious environmental litigation efforts. While experience or interest in both halves of the role – litigation and transactional legal support – would be ideal, we will consider applicants with primary experience in one of the areas.

This role will work to identify and manage existing and emerging risks associated with the activities of Earth Island's fiscally-sponsored projects. This work may involve drafting and reviewing complex contracts, assisting in negotiations on behalf of the fiscally-sponsored organization, and offering strategic guidance to them. These tasks often require creative problem solving to address emerging issues. Moreover, this position will provide legal and risk management advice, including but not limited to contract, intellectual property, employment, and tax, and will need to draft and review policies in these areas. On the litigation side, this role will support the General Counsel in lawsuits in all stages of litigation that advance Earth Island's mission of environmental stewardship and protection. This work may involve conducting legal research, drafting memos, working with other environmental organizations, and drafting legal motions and documents. The ideal candidate will have experience with some of these tasks and be excited to grow in other areas. You can learn more about Earth Island's current litigation [here](#).

Furthermore, all Earth Island staff are expected to take personal responsibility for advancing and embodying the values highlighted in our new Theory of Change (Adaptability, Community, Courage, Joy, Justice & Equity, Power Redistribution). Please note that EINS will be engaging in a strategic planning process in 2025 and all staff will be expected to engage in that effort. Finally, the director of legal (staff attorney) will supervise the work of pro-bono attorneys, law students, and consultants providing non-litigation legal assistance to Earth Island's fiscally-sponsored projects.

This position is an excellent match for someone who enjoys taking initiative and thinking creatively about legal strategies; is a problem-solver by nature; has had steadily increasing legal responsibilities; and seeks to join a dynamic, innovative, and impactful organization. We encourage applications that show experience in either transactional or litigation matters, or both.

The Staff Attorney will be an exempt role that reports to the General Counsel.

Core responsibilities

- Provide legal and risk management advice and judgment on a wide range of legal matters related to Earth Island's fiscally-sponsored projects, including but not limited to contract, intellectual property, employment, and tax, and help devise creative solutions to emerging issues;
- Participate in the definition and development of policies, procedures, and programs related to legal and risk management with respect to Earth Island's project network;
- Keep current on new and emerging laws, policy developments, and best practices related to compliance programs, with a focus on those relating to tax-exempt organizations;
- Help supervise a network of pro-bono attorneys, law students, and consultants to assist Earth Island's project support team and fiscally-sponsored projects;
- Support the General Counsel to manage ongoing litigation and strategy that supports the goals and objectives of Earth Island and its projects;
- Other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Qualifications

We strongly encourage individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, including women and people of color, to apply. Research has shown that these groups are often less likely to apply unless they meet 100% of the listed qualifications. At Earth Island, we value diversity and believe that a range of perspectives contributes to our success. If you have at least 60% of the qualifications listed and a growth mindset, we encourage you to submit your application.

- Minimum of three - five years of professional experience in litigation, preferably within the nonprofit community;
- Supervisory experience preferred;

- Juris Doctor (JD) degree from an accredited law school
- Admitted to practice law in the relevant jurisdiction
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to convey complex ideas clearly and persuasively to a diverse range of audiences;
- Strong experience in legal drafting, research, and writing skills
- Excellent strategic thinking and problem-solving abilities
- Demonstrated strong planning skills, including the ability to anticipate tasks, set priorities, meet deadlines, and function smoothly under quick deadlines and shifting priorities;
- Familiarity with environmental law or non-profit sector regulations is preferred.
- Exceptional interpersonal communication and relationship-building skills;
- Ability to demonstrate sensitivity to and appreciation for diverse viewpoints, different communication styles, and a wide range of diverse colleagues and project partners;
- Humble curiosity, creativity, and initiative with a willingness to accept and take on new challenges;
- Computer proficient with a comprehensive working knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, and Adobe
- Familiarity with some or all of the following systems: Canva, Nifty, and Google Suite; and
- Ability to work some weekday evenings and weekends as required.

Compensation, hours, and location

This is a full-time, exempt position. The salary for this position is \$99,717. This salary may be adjusted upward to the maximum of \$117,314 if a candidate has prior experience at Earth Island and/or a candidate has significant relevant experience (in years) beyond the minimum outlined in the job description. Earth Island (Network Services) has adopted a compensation philosophy and set of practices to promote equity, remove bias — whether implicit or explicit — in the salary adjustment process, and to promote transparency around salaries. Each position has a grade and has a corresponding range of pay based on our peer market pay practices and an employee's tenure in a job. Full benefits include medical, dental, vision, and life insurance, 13 paid holidays per year, a week-long winter break, paid vacation and sick leave, and a 401(k) plan with employer match.

The position is in Earth Island's Berkeley, California office. This position can be fully-based in the Berkeley office or hybrid in the Bay Area, with at least three days per week in the office and attendance at other regular in-person meetings and gatherings.

Application

Please send your resume along with a cover letter expressing your interest in Earth Island and how your qualifications align with the responsibilities of this position, and your LinkedIn profile (optional), to jobs@earthisland.org with “Staff Attorney” in the subject line.

Application initial review timeline

Applications sent in by February 28, 2025, will be considered for priority review. Applicants may receive contact prior to February 28, 2025 to participate in a short screening call. The position will be open until filled.

Covid-19 Considerations

EII is committed to protecting the health of our employees. To this end, EII employees are required to be vaccinated or provide documentation of medical or religious exemption. We will continue to evaluate these policies and practices informed by public health guidance and employee needs.

Earth Island Institute provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty, or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

We strongly encourage applications from women, people of color, and bilingual and bicultural individuals, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Earth Island Institute is committed to our role in addressing barriers to engagement as we work collectively toward a future of environmental wellbeing for all. We value diversity and inclusion and we look forward to reviewing applications from all who are qualified to apply.

Reasonable accommodation will be made so that qualified disabled applicants may participate in the application process. If you seek an accommodation, please send an email to Michelle Thompson at HR@earthisland.org.