ORIENTATION DESCRIPTION

Restore Justice is the only policy organization in Illinois specifically working to address issues faced by those serving life or de-facto life sentences and their families. Our purpose is to roll back the “tough-on-crime” policies of the past, replacing them with compassionate, smart, and safe policies for the future. To that end, we have a strategic plan that includes a theory of change supported by outcome goals and process objectives. More information about our work can be found on our website at: https://restorejustice.org/.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Leading Edge Fellow will work with the Executive Director and Communications Manager to produce an in-depth report about juvenile life without parole sentences in Illinois. The fellow will interview people who had or have juvenile life without parole sentences, talk with experts about these sentences, research the history of such sentences, and compare Illinois’s laws to those in other states. Twenty-four states and Washington, D.C. have banned juvenile life without parole sentences, while six others have no one serving such sentences. Illinois is in the minority of states still using such sentences. These sentences defy the abundance of research about youth and brain development and set the United States apart. In fact, these sentences violate international law. In Illinois, there were 167 children serving these sentences, as of 2018, the last year for which public information is available. The report will contain in-depth text and information, in addition to photos, videos, and graphics. It will be displayed on an easy-to-navigate website. This report will help us change the narrative about juvenile life without parole sentences. The ultimate goal is to motivate the Legislature to eliminate these sentences. This is a full-time commitment for the fellowship year, including dedicated time for professional development activities.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Research and review literature on juvenile life without parole sentences, comparison of state-to-state policy
- Interview experts on juvenile sentencing
- Create fact sheets and other distributable materials
- Collaborate with the Restore Justice team to host live video or in-person panels focusing on juvenile life without parole sentences
- Collaborate with the team to produce outreach website and digital advocacy around the policy objective to eliminate juvenile life without parole sentencing

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields here;
This position is only available through the Leading Edge Fellowship program. You may not contact the host institution to inquire about this position.

- Excellent written and personal communication skills. Be able to write well, quickly; and, be willing to take the time to work with colleagues on writing for our audiences.
- Be comfortable creating and maintaining relationships with legislators, legislative staff, colleagues, and constituents.
- Demonstrated deep commitment to issues relating to long-term incarceration.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org)
- Application deadline: 9pm EDT, May 6, 2021