Center for Reproductive Rights seeking Director of US Legal Program, New York

Application deadline: 30 September 2011

The Center for Reproductive Rights, a global human rights organization with expertise in constitutional and international law, seeks a Director of U.S. Legal Program to be based in its New York City headquarters. The Director will report to the President and join the management team of an innovative and cutting-edge organization committed to promoting the equality, reproductive health, and self-determination of women throughout the world. National-level courts, regional human rights courts, and United Nations bodies have increasingly recognized that a woman’s right to reproductive autonomy and reproductive healthcare are basic human rights that must be protected. The Center for Reproductive Rights has played a key role in securing these legal victories and works with attorneys and advocates in the U.S., Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. In addition to its headquarters, the Center has offices in Washington, D.C., Nairobi, and Bogotá, and will open an office in Asia at the end of 2011. At a moment in which reproductive rights are under unprecedented assault in the U.S., this is an exciting opportunity for a passionate advocate with a track record of success to lead the U.S. Legal Program of this $11.7 million organization.

The Director of U.S. Legal Program will have the benefit of the Center’s many strengths:
- A compelling global human rights mission.
- Cutting-edge legal and policy work with a reputation for excellence.
- An unsurpassed legal team with a track record of boldness, innovation, and success.
- Established relationships with and the respect of journalists, judges, policymakers, reproductive health providers, bar leaders, academics, and social justice partners.
- A vibrant communications program with established press relationships and a growing social media following.
- A dynamic organization that has consistently grown in budget size and program impact.
- An impressive and engaged Board and strong leadership team.

The new Director will be joining the Center at an exciting time for the institution and at a critical time for the nation. Across the U.S., opponents of women's rights are mounting a scorched-earth campaign to turn back decades of hard-won progress. The Center is currently fighting back with short-, medium-, and long-term strategies, including: its largest and most diverse litigation docket ever; a nimble state legislative program that provides the first line of defense; human rights strategies to hold the U.S. government accountable; and a well-respected Law School Initiative to promote teaching and scholarship on reproductive rights. In December 2011, the Center’s Board will adopt a new strategic plan for 2012-2017 based on a year-long Board-staff process of external and internal examination and deliberation. As it marks its 20th Anniversary in 2012, the Center will be well-poised to defend against the current challenges in the U.S. and go on the offense to change the discourse and policy landscape to protect women’s dignity, equality, health, and autonomy.
ORGANIZATION, LEADERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE

Founded in 1992, the Center for Reproductive Rights is a non-profit organization that promotes women’s equality worldwide by securing reproductive rights in constitutional and international human rights law. Its mission is straightforward and ambitious: to advance reproductive health and rights as a fundamental right that all governments are legally obligated to protect, respect and fulfill. The Center is unmatched as a reproductive rights organization in its expertise on U.S. constitutional law, comparative law, and international human rights law.

The Center works across the globe on issues including access to life-saving obstetrics care, contraception, abortion services, and comprehensive sexuality information, as well as the prevention of forced sterilization and FGM. It has brought groundbreaking cases before national courts, U.N. committees, and regional human rights bodies, and has built the legal capacity of women’s rights advocates in over 50 countries. The Center’s groundbreaking litigation and advocacy has transformed how reproductive rights are understood by courts, governments, and human rights bodies, and its undivided focus on reproductive rights has given it unparalleled expertise in the use of constitutional, international and comparative human rights law to hold governments accountable for failing to ensure women's access to critical reproductive healthcare services.

In the U.S. Legal Program, the Center’s preeminent litigation team has helped millions of women and their families by securing government funding for abortions, striking down absolute abortion bans and other access restrictions, and protecting teens’ access to emergency contraception and confidential reproductive healthcare services and information. The Center's state program tracks over 500 anti-choice laws each year, and advocates vigorously to block harmful laws. At the same time that the Center is defending women’s reproductive rights in courts and legislatures, it works toward the long-term goal of promoting reproductive rights and health as a fundamental human rights issue. By incorporating a human rights framework in its U.S. work in communications, legal arguments (e.g., in amicus briefs), and tactics (e.g., fact-finding reports, U.S. obligations to U.N. human rights treaties), it seeks to bring developments in international and comparative constitutional law and litigation to bear on U.S. law and policy. The Center has used shadow reporting to U.N. treaty bodies to document racial disparities in reproductive health, obstacles to accessing safe, legal abortion, and the practice of shackling incarcerated pregnant women during labor. In 2008, the Center established the Law School Initiative to promote legal scholarship and teaching on reproductive health and human rights, an emerging body of transnational law, to shape the thinking of the next generation of lawyers, judges, and policymakers. The Law School Initiative includes an academic fellowship with Columbia Law School, visiting scholars, symposia, and conferences.

The Center is led by President & CEO Nancy Northup, who brings a rich mix of experience in public interest law, government service, and women’s rights advocacy. Under her leadership, the Center has expanded its international work, including the launch of an international litigation campaign that has included the first abortion case decided by the U.N. Human Rights Committee and the first case to frame preventable maternal deaths as a human rights violation. She also led the integration of the human rights framework in the Center’s U.S. work and
The establishment of the Law School Initiative. Before joining the Center in 2003, Ms. Northup served as the founding director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School; as a prosecutor and Deputy Chief of Appeals in the U.S. Attorney’s office for the Southern District of New York; and as a law clerk to the Honorable Alvin B. Rubin of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Ms. Northup has taught constitutional law and human rights as an adjunct professor at NYU and Columbia law schools.

The Center is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a 22-person board of directors. In addition to the President & CEO, the Center’s management team includes: the Chief Operating Officer; the Director of the U.S. Legal Program; the Director of the International Legal Program; the Director of Government Relations; the Director of Communications; and the Director of Development. The Center has a diverse staff of 70 professionals from Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Kenya, Korea, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sweden, Slovakia, the U.K., and the U.S.

THE POSITION
The Director of the U.S. Legal Program will be a leader of exceptional commitment, vision, courage, judgment, and willingness to challenge the status quo. This is an opportunity to lead a well-established, highly accomplished team of dedicated attorneys and advocates to the next stage of the Program’s development. Reporting to the President & CEO, and working closely with the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of the U.S. Legal Program will join the 7-member management team and oversee a 21-member department that includes deputy directors, senior counsel, senior staff attorneys, Law School Initiative director, staff attorneys, human rights counsel, human rights researcher, academic fellows, fellowship attorneys, and legal assistants. The U.S. Legal Program’s 2011 budget is approximately $4.0 million.

Key Responsibilities
The Director of U.S. Legal Program will advance the Center’s work and mission through the following responsibilities:
• Lead the effective implementation and evaluation of the Center’s 2012-17 strategic plan, which encompasses litigation, legislative, policy, human rights, and academic work.
• Serve on the senior management team responsible for institution-wide strategic and annual planning, implementation and evaluation; board reporting; leading and supporting a culture of excellence, effectiveness, transparency and dialogue; ensuring financial sustainability and growth; and advancing diversity as an integral part of CRR’s mission and strategies.
• Ensure through effective management and supervision that the day-to-day operations of the department are professionally and efficiently organized and administered; enable strong internal communication and coordination among staff and across departments; ensure department has high performing staff and staffing structure in place to advance institutional goals and effectiveness; and prepare and manage departmental expense budget; lead, inspire and support staff development.
• Encourage and lead the U.S. Legal Program’s collaborative work in the reproductive rights and justice movements, including relationships with NGOs, policymakers, private sector attorneys and other strategic partners in the fields of health, human rights, medicine and law.
• Serve as external ambassador for the U.S. Legal Program and assist development and communications objectives with fundraising, press, and public outreach.

Ideal Candidate
While no one person will possess all of the qualities listed below, the ideal candidate would have the following professional and personal characteristics:
• Strong commitment to the Center’s mission, purpose, and values. Experience in reproductive rights specifically is not required, but should include other areas of human rights, civil rights and liberties, and social justice.
• Successful experience leading or participating in significant strategic planning processes, coupled with the drive and organizational skills necessary to ensure that strategies are implemented, objectives achieved, and success measured.
• A highly sophisticated understanding of and substantial experience with the use of law as an instrument of social change; a track record of success in conceiving, building, and implementing innovative law reform programs; ability to envision and implement a progressive change agenda encompassing and integrating impact litigation, legislative and administrative reform, public education, advocacy campaigns, and human rights strategies.
• Significant management experience, including an accessible, direct, transparent, and collaborative working style that motivates and inspires staff and colleagues to work hard and well together, offers a clear sense of direction, and holds self and staff accountable. Experience managing organizational change and building a diverse team.
• Experience working effectively and collaboratively with a CEO and as a member of a senior management team.
• A track record as an outstanding external relationship builder, experience working with a broad and diverse range of communities. Ability and strong desire to work in coalition with other reproductive rights, human rights, and civil rights organizations.
• Experience connecting an organization with varied outside resources, pro bono and philanthropic; experience with fundraising from foundations and major donors is desirable.
• Outstanding legal skills; intellectually nimble; substantial knowledge of and experience with U.S. constitutional law.
• Exceptional communication and advocacy skills, both orally and in writing; ability to communicate complex issues to a lay audience clearly, concisely and powerfully.
• A high level of energy, self-confidence, initiative, and follow-through; ability to recognize and act on opportunities in a fast-paced environment.
• Principled, ethical, professional, and committed to exceptional work quality and standards.
• Grace and a sense of humor.
• Spanish language fluency a plus.
• J.D. and ability to travel approximately 20% of the time required.

To learn more about the Center for Reproductive Rights, please visit: www.reproductiverights.org

To apply for the position, please submit a substantive cover letter and current resume to:
Lauren I. Gumbs, Senior Partner
Gumbs + Partners
lgumbs@gumbspartners.com

The Center for Reproductive Rights is an equal opportunity employer and considers all applications without regard to race, color, religion, creed, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, disability, socio-economic status, marital or veteran status, or sexual orientation.