

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.

People Against Landlord Abuse & Tenant Exploitation



ABOUT PA'LANTE HARLEM

PA'LANTE Harlem ("PA'LANTE") is a community-based grassroots organization that works to reduce poverty, advocate for safe housing, and end tenant exploitation by holding negligent landlords and property managers accountable for unsafe living conditions and violations of landlord-tenant law, thereby enabling lower-income and working-class community residents to remain in homes that are safe and affordable. PA'LANTE engages in advocacy and outreach, organizes effective tenant associations, provides long-term technical assistance, and represents individuals and tenant groups in New York City Housing Court, New York State Supreme Court, and before administrative agencies, particularly the New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal ("DHCR").

For well over a decade, PA'LANTE has organized tenant associations to address deteriorating physical conditions in their buildings; assisted with enrolling buildings into the Proactive Preservation Initiative; successfully advocated for a legislative change to ensure succession rights for family members in Tenant Interim Lease buildings; obtained hundreds of rent reduction orders from DHCR for conditions in apartments and public areas of apartment buildings; preserved thousands of apartments through repairs and upgrades; prevented hundreds of evictions and illegal deregulations; and successfully obtained more than \$1 million in rent refunds to dozens of families who were overcharged rent by their landlords.

POSITION OVERVIEW

PA'LANTE is seeking an Associate Counsel, Senior Associate Counsel, or Senior Counsel – depending on experience – to join its Legal Department. The attorney will primarily represent tenants in upper Manhattan and the Bronx, fighting to enforce tenants' housing rights in Housing Court, Supreme Court, and administrative agencies.

The PA'LANTE Legal Department is grounded in the organization's grassroots and dynamic approach to tenant advocacy, which sets it apart from other non-profit legal services providers. This approach emphasizes strategic consideration of how to best and most comprehensively address tenants' legal issues, and it entails diligence in enforcing our clients' rights through contempt and other enforcement mechanisms to truly realize the benefit of settlements and/or court or agency orders.

The attorney will work collaboratively with the Managing Counsel and other members of the team to bring cases in Housing Court, suing for repairs from landlords and property managers, especially those who have historically failed to address hazardous housing conditions that pose serious health and safety threats to vulnerable tenants. The attorney will also defend tenants and assertively pursue and leverage counterclaims on their behalf in nonpayment and holdover proceedings. The practice also includes representation before DHCR on rent overcharge and rent reduction complaints, as well as proceedings in Supreme Court and appellate courts.

PA'LANTE recognizes the dignity of our historically-marginalized communities. It is therefore essential to understand the burdens tenants face on a daily basis. To that end, the attorney will be expected to interact directly with tenants and tenant associations in a culturally competent manner.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide representation to tenants in various forums, especially Housing Court, Supreme Court, and the New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal
- Engage in non- and pre-litigation advocacy with opposing counsel, landlords, and managing agents.
- Assess tenants' legal issues during periodic legal clinics, evaluate matters for potential representation, and provide legal advice.
- Conduct legal research; draft and file court pleadings; engage in motion practice, including motions for contempt when appropriate; negotiate and draft stipulations of settlement and follow through to ensure enforcement and compliance.
- Participate in and/or lead periodic tenant association evening meetings when representing a group of tenants.
- In conjunction with the Managing Counsel and Executive Director, identify potential areas of impact litigation.
- Update case management system, maintain and update files and case notes, and assist in grant reporting when needed.
- Present "know your rights" trainings for tenants.
- Work with the Managing Counsel, Executive Director, and other team members to represent PA'LANTE in the community.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Admission to the bar of the State of New York.
- Three (3) years of relevant litigation experience (preferred).
- Fluent in written and spoken Spanish.
- A deep commitment to advocating and litigating on behalf of working-class, lower-income, and marginalized communities
- A proven ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups of people, offices, agencies, and organizations.
- Excellent legal writing, research, litigation, and advocacy skills.
- Reliable, detail-oriented, well-organized, and able to work both collaboratively and independently.

COMPENSATION

Salary range of \$76,000 to \$110,000 (dependent on experience). PA'LANTE offers a generous benefits package, including health, dental, and vision insurance, paid sick/personal days, vacation time with rollover days, retirement account, life insurance, etc.

HOW TO APPLY

This position reports to Jeremiah Schlotman, Esq., Managing Counsel. Please send a cover letter and résumé by email to Elsia Vasquez at elsia.vasquez@palanteharlem.org with “PA’LANTE Attorney Opening” in the subject line. Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.