IRIS – Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (www.irisct.org), a dynamic nonprofit organization in New Haven CT, has an opening for a Staff Attorney. The position can be part- or full-time (in the range of 25-40 hours per week), depending on the Staff Attorney’s preference. The Staff Attorney should be experienced in representing clients who are in removal proceedings in Immigration Court. The position requires some travel, mostly to and from Massachusetts.

Description of IRIS’s Legal Department: IRIS’s Immigration Legal Services Department is comprised of three part-time attorneys and one full-time legal assistant. IRIS currently provides high-quality and culturally-sensitive representation to refugees and asylum seekers. IRIS assists the refugees it has settled with their applications for green cards and citizenship, and with their petitions for reunification with family members still overseas. IRIS assists asylum seekers on all aspects of their affirmative asylum cases. IRIS attorneys work with asylum seekers to develop their cases, submit all relevant documentation and evidence, and represent them at their asylum interviews.

Description of Staff Attorney Position: IRIS is seeking to expand the group of clients it serves to include detained immigrants brought into Immigration Court in Boston, MA on deportation charges. Because Connecticut residents who are picked up by ICE are currently housed in detention facilities in Massachusetts (Bristol and Plymouth County Jails), as well as some in Rhode Island and New Hampshire, the Staff Attorney will need to travel to detention facilities in those areas to meet with clients. When those clients have court dates, the Staff Attorney will need to travel to Boston to represent them in Immigration Court. On all other days, case work can be done out of IRIS’s office in New Haven.

The Staff Attorney should be skilled in representing clients in removal proceedings and advising them on their best options and all accompanying consequences. Additionally, the Staff Attorney should be prepared to train other IRIS attorneys so that they too can start to represent individuals in removal proceedings. The Staff Attorney will report to the Director of Immigration Legal Services.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities: The Staff Attorney should be a licensed member of a state bar in good standing, qualified to represent clients in immigration matters. The Staff Attorney shall have a J.D. from an ABA-accredited law school. Excellent written, oral, analytic, and organizational skills are required. Fluency in English is also required. Fluency in Spanish is preferred. The position may be part-time or full-time, as the Staff Attorney prefers.

Salary and Benefits: The salary being offered with this position will depend on the candidate’s experience. Benefits are offered to any employee working 30 or more hours per week.

Requirements: Candidates must have at least one year of experience representing individuals in removal proceedings; strong advocacy, writing, communication and organizational skills; and ability to handle multiple demands and shifting priorities in a fast-paced environment. Candidates must have a
demonstrated commitment to the mission of IRIS and awareness and sensitivity to multicultural issues. Specific duties include:

- Attend Immigration Court in Boston, MA with clients in removal proceedings
- Travel to detention facilities, most frequently the one in Bristol, MA, to meet with clients being held there
- Advise clients on their removal cases, including being able to explain how the system works, what their options are at each stage, and what any attending outcomes may be
- Train other IRIS attorneys on representation of clients in removal proceedings (with the goal being that they start to take defensive cases in the near future as well)
- Work well with other attorneys, legal assistants, and volunteers

To apply, send an email to humanresources@irisct.org with the following:

- A subject line that says “STAFF ATTORNEY: [Candidate first and last name]”
- Cover letter
- Resume
- Contact information for two references