



## **RHODE ISLAND WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION** **SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER**

### **MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT** **CASSANDRA L. FEENEY: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

I am honored to serve as the President of the RIWBA for the upcoming 2022-2023 Membership Year, alongside our very dedicated Board of Directors.

I wish to extend an enormous thank you to our immediate Past President, Samantha Vasques, for leading the RIWBA through numerous changes and challenges this past year, and all the members of the Board of Directors who have served with me and before me.

I have been a member of the RIWBA since the beginning of my legal career, and I have had the privilege of serving on the RIWBA Board of Directors for the last several years.

The RIWBA has been instrumental in the development of my career, community, and network, through which I have met some of my closest friends, as well as my strongest advocates and mentors. The RIWBA has accomplished a lot for me, and I know it has for many others.

But we know there is still a lot of work to be done. We recently received the survey results from the RI Bar Association Diversity & Inclusion Task Force. The results confirm what a lot of us already know—that gender bias, both explicit and implicit, among other biases, persist in our profession.

We need the RIWBA. We need it to continue to work to achieve its primary purpose: To promote the advancement of women in the legal profession.

To that end, this year we have started the hard work of developing a strategic plan. We started the strategic planning process with a survey, because it is *your* Association. We

want it to best serve you, your needs, and your goals. We need your input as to what you would like us to do and how we can achieve those goals.

We ask you to participate, both with respect to the strategic plan and upcoming year. Complete the survey. Attend our events, and bring your colleagues. Share your thoughts on what is working and what we can improve. Get involved with the Strategic Plan Task Force or one of our various subcommittees.

I have found of my own involvement that the more time I engage with our members and events, the more fulfilled and connected I become.

Please contact me or any member of the Board of Directors with any thoughts, comments, and feedback. We are here to serve you and, ultimately, to improve our profession and the bar in this state.

Thank you for your continued membership and continued support. I greatly look forward to working with and interacting with each of you over the next year.

- Cassandra L. Feeney

*Cassandra Feeney is a trial attorney. She helps professionals and small businesses navigate risk management and legal matters, and she helps people who are injured at no fault of their own. Cassandra is a partner at Hamel, Waxler, Allen & Collins and can be reached at [cfeeney@hwac.com](mailto:cfeeney@hwac.com) or 401-455-3800.*



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO DOBBS v. JACKSON WOMEN'S**  
**HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

PROVIDENCE, RI—June 28, 2022 - The announcement of the Dobbs decision overturning Roe v. Wade has been met with anxiety, despair, and downright fear by many in our community, for it overturns fifty years of rights-protecting precedent and marks a sharp step backwards in terms of women's reproductive freedom and healthcare. As the largest association of women attorneys in Rhode Island, the RIWBA was deeply disturbed by the draft option that was leaked in early May, and remains so in light of Friday's truly devastating decision. It not only imperils the health and safety of so many but is also a chilling harbinger of the future direction of the court and the erosion of additional fundamental rights. Moreover, and as is so often the case, the effects of this decision will likely be disproportionately borne by traditionally marginalized groups, such as minorities and LGBTQI+, as well as those with few resources and options.

It is the mission of the RIWBA to promote the advancement and status of women in the State of Rhode Island, and to advocate for the fair and equal administration of justice throughout the state of Rhode Island.

We must all continue to fight for reproductive equity and justice. As discussed in our original response to the leak of the Dobbs draft, the RIWBA remains committed to fighting for reproductive freedom and the right to privacy. Although the Supreme Court of Rhode Island recently upheld the Superior Court's dismissal of a challenge to our state's Reproductive Privacy Act—which effectively grants those in our state the right to an abortion as articulated in Roe—we must stand with those who do not have the privilege of that protection and fight to make sure additional fundamental rights are not diminished or taken away.

We have started to compile a list of resources, including organizations that need support and other steps you can take to continue the fight for the protection of these fundamental civil rights:

- ACLU -- <https://www.aclu.org/issues/reproductive-freedom> Center for Reproductive Rights <https://reproductiverights.org/take-action-abortion-is-essential/>
- National Abortion Federation -- <https://prochoice.org/>
- Women's March -- <https://www.womensmarch.com/>
- Women's Health & Education Fund -- [Whefri.org](http://Whefri.org)
- Women's Fund of RI -- <https://wfri.org/>
- NARAL Pro Choice America -- <https://www.prochoiceamerica.org/>
- National Black Women's Reproductive Agenda -- <https://blackrj.org/>
- Guttmacher Institute -- <https://www.guttmacher.org/>
- RI Coalition for Reproductive Freedom -- <https://www.ricrf.org/>

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:**

Renew your membership for the 2022-2023 membership year here:

<https://www.riwba.com/buy-membership/m3gb7f0bl9l9anavkdpz0f0ymeyt3d>

If you have any questions about membership, please contact our membership committee chair, Lisa M. Kresge, at [lkresge@brcsm.com](mailto:lkresge@brcsm.com).

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**New England Women in Energy and the Environment, Doing Well by Doing Good: The Business of ESG and How It's Driving Change in Energy and Environment,** August 3, 5-8pm, West Hartford, CT. More information and registration details available [here](#).

**SAVE THE DATE—Our annual kickoff is just around the corner!**

**Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.**

Narragansett Brewery  
271 Tockwotton St  
Providence, RI 02903

Please register here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-kick-off-event-tickets-394136812817>



## **PHOTOS FROM THE RIWBA ANNUAL MEETING:**

We had a great turnout this year for the RIWBA Annual Meeting in June at The District in Providence. Congratulations to Associate Justice Linda Rekas Sloan, this year's Ada Sawyer Award winner, and to the new RIWBA Board! Thank you again to our sponsors for supporting RIWBA.



Thank you to our sponsors for supporting the Rhode Island Women's Bar Association!

**AON** Platinum Sponsors  
**APQS**  
**brownrudnick**

Silver Sponsor  
**KEY MEDIATION**

**HAMEL WAXLER ALLEN & COLLINS**

## MEMBERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS:

Want to brag on one of your fellow members? Including yourself? Email Jessica Rider at [jrider@riag.ri.gov](mailto:jrider@riag.ri.gov) so that we can include those accomplishments in a future edition!

## ARTICLES AND RESOURCES OF INTEREST:

See how big law firms are trying to close the pay gap and increase opportunities for women and diverse attorneys: [How BigLaw Aims to Make Good on “Meritocracy,” lessen pay gap.](#)

### Seeing Things Differently

Men, women, and senior leaders don't see eye-to-eye on law firms' success promoting women into the highest ranks.



Source: 2019 American Bar Association, ALM Media Survey "Walking Out the Door."  
Survey questioned more than 1,600 senior leaders from the 500 largest firms by headcount.

Bloomberg Law

Hybrid Competency in the workplace is a new skill that is worth highlighting for employers: [Hybrid Competency](#). The new resume skill to highlight. (*Business Insider*).

**Scholarship Opportunity for rising female 3Ls: Calling all aspiring women trial lawyers!** [Aspiring Women Trial LawHERS](#)

**Have a valuable article or resource for our membership?** Email Amanda Valentino at [avalentino7@gmail.com](mailto:avalentino7@gmail.com) to add it to next month's edition!

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:**

Women's Health & Education Fund is actively recruiting new board members! Here is their website: [BOARD RECRUITMENT — Women's Health & Education Fund](#)

The Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence. We have been engaging in strategic conversations to propel the cause forward, and seeking an **Executive Director**. It's an exciting opportunity at the intersection of public policy and fundraising. Here is the job: [Executive Director Job Description | Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence](#)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is hiring for an attorney with significant experience prosecuting domestic violence and sexual assault cases. The Staff Attorney is responsible for developing and delivering all curricula and trainings that the MDAA offers through its Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant funding. The Staff Attorney is required to develop monthly webinars and to conduct on-site trainings for prosecutors, victim-witness advocates and other law enforcement professionals on topics related to violence against women. The Staff Attorney is responsible for tracking all relevant proposed legislation, as well as changes to pertinent laws enacted by the Legislature or decided by the Courts. The Staff Attorney is responsible for summarizing appellate cases for statewide distribution, updating legal resources, and contributing to website content. The Staff Attorney is required to travel throughout the Commonwealth to provide trainings. The Staff Attorney is responsible for writing an annual VAWA grant application, and satisfying all grant reporting requirements.

[Staff Attorney](#)

### **Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Counsel 1**

The Counsel I in DHCD's Legal Division provides legal services and support to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC), in the conduct of hearings, researching and preparing draft decisions and legal memoranda. The Counsel I also provides legal services and support to DHCD staff. The ideal candidate has at least 4 years experience in the practice of law, a significant portion of which is related to real estate development, zoning and permitting, adjudicatory hearings, and M.G.L. c. 40B. They possess exceptional analytical and communication skills, take initiative, and have

demonstrated ability managing and prioritizing multiple assignments and meeting tight deadlines. They have excellent writing, legal research, and advocacy skills, and possess good judgment in making decisions and offering advice. More information available [here](#).

### **Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation, Legal Counsel**

General Statement of Duties: To serve as an attorney in a state office by providing legal advice and services; to serve as a hearing officer as assigned; and to do related work as required.

Salary: \$74,259.00 - \$84,059.00 Annually

More information available at: [Legal Counsel](#)

### **Rhode Island Attorney General's Office:**

(a full description of each position can be found at the end of the newsletter)

- Special Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division
- Classification Clerk, Bureau of Criminal Identification
- Paralegal, Criminal Division
- Legal Assistant, Civil

**Are you hiring?** Know someone looking for a top-notch applicant for an open position?

Email Amanda Valentino at [avalentino7@gmail.com](mailto:avalentino7@gmail.com) to add an opportunity to our employment section!

### **MONTHLY MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:**

The Monthly Member Spotlight is your cheat sheet to the incredible women who are your fellow RIWBA members. Keep an eye on your inbox, because you might be next!

This month, we are delighted to spotlight **MEGAN SHEEHAN, OWNER** of **SHEEHAN & ASSOCIATES**. Read on to learn more about **MEGAN!**

#### **What would you sing at karaoke night?**

I LOVE karaoke, but don't get to do a whole lot of it in this phase of my life. My favorite karaoke song is "Come to My Window" by Melissa Etheridge, mostly because it's easy to sing. I have a bad tendency to get overly ambitious





and sing songs that are really outside of my range, but no matter what I have a blast!

**What is one of the kindest things someone has done for you?**

I had a really hard time with postpartum after my son was born. I had some women in my life really be present for me and regularly check in on me during that time. It meant so much to me because I was really struggling. I try to keep that in mind whenever my friends or family become new parents, and try to go out of my way to give them extra support.

**What is one goal you'd still like to accomplish in your lifetime?**

Travel more! I traveled a lot before practicing law and having my kid, and can't wait to get back to it. I'm planning a trip to Scotland for next summer with my husband and 6 year old.

**Can you share something about yourself that others would be surprised to learn?**

I rode my bicycle from Seattle to San Diego to Florida when I was in my 20's. My legs were really jacked by the end! I went with my husband and we mostly camped along the way. We met so many wonderful and kind people on our trip, and it really reaffirmed my faith in humanity.

**Where is your favorite place in the world?**

I used to live in East Randolph, VT, and there was a pond near where we lived called Sunset Pond in Brookfield, VT. It had a floating bridge across it. Swimming there in the middle of the summer was one of my all time favorite things to do, and such a great place to be. It's probably my favorite place in the world.

**In fifty words or fewer, describe what you want other RIWBA members to know about your practice:**

Sheehan & Associates Law is focused on small business legal services, estate planning, and civil litigation. I practice heavily in cannabis, which is always interesting! The practice is truly a family business- my mother Maura Sheehan started the firm and still practices with us part time. We have offices in Barrington, RI and Lexington, MA.

## **CALLING ALL LAW FIRM OWNERS:**

We are connecting RIWBA members who are law firm owners for networking and to share business development ideas and inspiration. Reach out to [lindsay@lindsaylieberman.com](mailto:lindsay@lindsaylieberman.com) to be included in the communications!

## **NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE:**

Have something you would like to see in the next newsletter? Let us know by **August 26, 2022** to include it in the latest edition. And as always, thanks for reading!

*Amanda Valentino, Cassandra Feeney, Jessica Rider, Lindsay Lieberman, and Meredith Thommen.*

**RIWBA Newsletter Committee**

**CLASSIFICATION CLERK  
BUREAU OF CRIMINAL IDENTIFICATION  
RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
PAY GRADE 8714 (\$43,228 - \$47,114)  
July 28, 2022 – August 9, 2022**

\* Please note that this position is for 2nd shift (4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.) and requires at least one weekend shift per month.

About the Office: The Attorney General is the state's top lawyer and law enforcement official, protecting and serving the people and interests of Rhode Island through a broad range of duties. Every day, the Office's attorneys fight to ensure the public safety of the state's communities, improve the economic security of its citizens, safeguard the state's spectacular natural resources, and restore the public's trust in government. Assistant and Special Assistant Attorneys General represent the people of Rhode Island in civil and criminal matters before trial courts, appellate courts, and the supreme courts of Rhode Island and the United States. The Office is unique among attorneys general offices across the country. Out of fifty states, only two other offices share the same broad criminal mission. The Office's attorneys prosecute complex and violent crimes but also functionally serve as one of the nation's largest district attorney's offices, prosecuting all felonies throughout the state.

Duties/Responsibilities: The office is seeking an individual with excellent organizational, social and communication skills to fill a position within the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI). The position offers a unique and challenging experience for a highly motivated person. The selected candidate will be assigned to work as a classification clerk within BCI. This position is for second shift only (4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.) and requires working one weekend per month. Primary duties include the following:

- Conducting criminal background checks for the public
- Processing criminal record expungement orders from the court system
- Processing Permit to Carry a Pistol applications
- Processing Security Guard License applications
- Answering phone calls from the public
- Conducting criminal history checks for prosecuting attorneys
- Entering/quashing warrants in the state and national criminal history systems
- Working with police departments to confirm warrants and court orders
- Entering criminal case dispositions
- Entering Restraining/No Contact Orders into state and national criminal history systems.
- Processing fax requests from Courts, Judges, and police departments
- Monitoring security cameras for all AG buildings

Education/Experience/Special Requirements: Applicants should have excellent computer skills, be well organized and comfortable dealing with the public. Familiarity with criminal justice procedures is preferred but not mandatory.

If applying for position by submitting cover letter and resume via mail or email, no need to apply through online system.

Application Process: Applicants should submit a (1) a cover letter summarizing why you are interested and describing the skills and abilities you possess that will enable you to succeed in this position, (2) resume, and (3) list of three references to:

Aida P. Crosson  
Director of Administration  
Office of Attorney General  
150 South Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
acrosson@riag.ri.gov

Equal Opportunity Employer: The Attorney General's Office is stronger, more credible, and more capable when its employees bring diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives to their work. The Office encourages all qualified applicants from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, veterans, LGBTQ individuals, and persons with disabilities to apply.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, disability, or covered veteran status.

Other Information: Finalists will be subject to a background investigation including reference checks. All offers of employment are contingent upon successful completion of the background investigation.

**SPECIAL ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CIVIL DIVISION  
RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
PAYGRADE 8728 (\$68,921 - \$77,944) OR COMMENSURATE WITH EXPERIENCE  
July 21, 2022 – August 18, 2022  
POSITION CURRENTLY OPEN**

The Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General is seeking a candidate for a Special Assistant Attorney General (SAAG) position within the Civil Division. The attorney in this position will be expected to work in the Government Litigation Bureau.

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Civil Division: The Civil Division defends the State through its Government Litigation Bureau and brings litigation and other initiatives through the Public Protection Bureau.

Within the Civil Division, the Government Litigation Bureau, leads litigation on behalf of the state, counsels the Attorney General and other government officials, and performs a range of regulatory duties. This also includes the Attorney General's Open Government Unit which is responsible for helping to ensure government in Rhode Island is carried out in an open and transparent manner. Open Government is one of the Attorney General's top priorities. One of the Office's key regulatory responsibilities is to serve as the State's chief investigator and enforcer of Rhode Island's open government laws – the Access to Public Records Act and the Open Meetings Act.

The Public Protection Bureau, recently created within the Civil Division, is comprised of four units – Healthcare, Consumer and Economic Justice, Environmental and Energy, and Civil & Community Rights. Each of these units affirmatively develops legal work and initiatives by using the legal authority of the Office of Attorney General to advance and protect dignity, quality of life and equity for all Rhode Islanders.

From identifying and pursuing landmark civil actions against businesses and individuals that have harmed Rhode Islanders to defending state laws, state agencies, state general officers, legislators, and employees, the Division and its attorneys are at the forefront of matters being

litigated before trial courts, appellate courts, and the supreme courts of Rhode Island and the United States.

**Duties and Opportunities:** For this position, a SAAG in the Civil Division will be responsible for case development, pre-trial litigation, negotiation, written and oral argument, regulatory and agency advising and trial work. The applicant will be expected to carry a full civil litigation caseload in the capacity as first and as second chair, and be expected to draft, file, and argue motions/legal memoranda, as well as litigate, in state and federal court on behalf of the state of Rhode Island, its agencies, and its officers or employees.

This position will also support the Attorney General's Open Government Unit. The applicant may be responsible for responding to Access to Public Records Act requests made to the Office of Attorney General – working with attorneys and staff throughout the Office to determine what is responsive to a given request and public under the law - as well as investigating and responding to complaints made by citizens that other entities have violated the Open Meetings Act and/or the Access to Public Records Act. Resolution of these complaints often involves complex sets of facts or legal issues, some of which are the first impression. Work on the Open Government team requires both excellent research and writing ability, as well as sound judgment.

Opportunities for Special Assistant Attorneys General in the Civil Division also include: attending National Association of Attorney General trainings and conferences throughout the country, serving on state, local, federal, and/or non-profit boards, commissions, working groups, and/or task forces as a designee of the Attorney General, providing substantive expertise to legislative or policy initiatives, and supervising student interns as part of the Office's legal internship program.

**Eligibility:** The successful applicant must have a law degree from an accredited law school and be an active member in good standing of the bar of any jurisdiction. If not a member of the Rhode Island Bar, the candidate must be eligible for admission to the Rhode Island bar and, if necessary, be willing to take the Rhode Island bar examination.

**Qualifications:** Candidates with three to five years of litigation experience are preferred. Strong candidates will have a demonstrated commitment to public interest law. Candidates must have strong written/oral advocacy and negotiating skills and possess the capacity to function in a sometimes-high stress, demanding environment. Applicant must work well independently and as part of a team, including with other attorneys and support staff. Ability to work with other state government employees and communicate with members of the public is a must. Litigation experience in both state and federal court is preferred. The applicant should bring innovative thinking to the ways in which the Office of the Attorney General can consistently and increasingly meet the needs of Rhode Island residents.

Application Process: If applying for position by submitting cover letter and resume via mail or email, there is no need to also apply through online system. Applicants should submit a (1) a cover letter summarizing why you are interested and describing the skills and abilities you possess that will enable you to succeed in this position, (2) resume, (3) list of three references, and (4) a writing sample to:

Aida Crosson  
Director of Administration  
Office of the Attorney General  
150 South Main Street Providence, RI 02903 [acrosson@riag.ri.gov](mailto:acrosson@riag.ri.gov)

Equal Opportunity Employer:

The Attorney General's Office is stronger, more credible, and more capable when its attorneys bring diverse backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives to their work. The Office encourages all qualified applicants from all ethnic and racial backgrounds, veterans, LGBTQ individuals, and persons with disabilities to apply.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration without regard to race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, disability, or covered veteran status.

Other Information: Finalists will be subject to a full background investigation including reference checks. All offers of employment are contingent upon successful completion of the background investigation, receipt of letters of good standing from each Bar in which the applicant is a member, and membership in good standing with, or admission into, the Rhode Island Bar. In certain limited circumstances, applicants may be hired pending temporary or full admission.

**PARALEGAL  
CRIMINAL DIVISION  
RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
Paygrade 8717 (\$46,303 – \$51,431)  
July 14, 2022 – August 5, 2022**

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Responsibilities: The position offers a unique and challenging experience for a highly motivated person. The office is seeking a paralegal that will be responsible for paralegal duties within the Criminal Division. The person selected for the position will assist prosecutors with assigned legal matters and cases. This includes reviewing case materials, drafting discovery requests and responses and initiating/e-filing cases in the Odyssey/File & Serve portals and Criminal case management system (CMS); assisting with trial preparation; coordinating with police officers and witnesses; legal research; and any other related duties as instructed by the Unit or County Chief and Chief Paralegal of the Criminal Division.

Qualifications: Such as having been gained through graduation from a senior high school, supplemented by courses in paralegal studies. Applicants must possess superior paralegal, clerical, and organizational skills, be computer literate, adept at learning new computer programs and the capacity to function at a high level in a demanding environment. Additionally, applicants must exhibit the ability to work in a supportive and professional manner with other support staff, attorneys, law enforcement agencies, and the general public.

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Providence, RI 02903

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**LEGAL ASSISTANT  
RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
CIVIL DIVISION  
PAY GRADE 8714 (\$43,228 – 47,114)  
Or commensurate with experience  
July 13, 2022 – August 3, 2022**

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Duties/Responsibilities: The position offers a unique and challenging experience for a highly motivated person with significant opportunities for advancement. The office is seeking a legal assistant that will be responsible for paralegal/secretarial duties and offer assistance to the Civil Division and its attorneys. Primary responsibilities include preparation of legal documents and correspondence, entering data for case tracking programs, electronic filing with the Courts, preparing and maintaining case files, assisting with incoming mail and telephone calls and other related duties, as instructed.

Education/Experience/Special Requirements: Experience such as may have been gained through employment in a responsible legal assistant position or any combination of education and experience that shall be substantially equivalent. Applicants must possess superior clerical and organizational skills, as well as the capacity to function at a high level in a demanding environment. Additionally, applicants must exhibit the ability to work in a supportive and professional manner with other support staff, attorneys and law enforcement agencies.

Candidates must be computer literate with proficiency in Microsoft Word and Outlook. The qualified applicant must be able to pass an extensive background check.

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How to Apply: Applicants should email or mail (1) a cover letter summarizing why you are interested and describing the skills and abilities you possess that will enable you to succeed in this position, (2) resume, and (3) list of three references to:

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