Advocate Job Posting (County Version)

**Job Title:** [insert job title]

**Department:** [insert department name]

**Reports to:** [insert supervisor title]

**FLSA Status:** [insert Exempt or Non-Exempt]

**Prepared Date:** February 2024

**Salary Range:** [insert salary range]

POSITION SUMMARY

The [job title] assists attorneys representing indigent clients in criminal cases. This position plays a critical role in supporting clients through the entirety of their criminal case while ensuring proper delivery of services beyond the client’s legal needs. This includes conducting in-depth interviews with clients about their circumstances and identifying issues related to immediate or long-term needs, such as housing, mental health services, substance use treatment, and accessing benefits. The [job title] also works with the client to help navigate the legal system, refers clients to clinical or relevant experts, obtains medical and treatment records, and connects clients to resources that can address their identified needs.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The [job title] is expected to perform the following functions. Other tasks may be assigned as needed.

**SERVICES PLANNING AND CONNECTION**

Build relationships and conduct interviews with clients to understand their service priorities and map out how to achieve them. Identify any collateral consequences or enmeshed penalties the client may be facing from their arrest, and assess potential barriers to a client accessing desired services.

Build partnerships and contacts with local community organizations and government agencies to maintain knowledge about available services and facilitate access to those resources.

Develop and maintain a resource guide of social and legal services currently available in the community and more broadly in [insert name] County that can be used for more efficient client referrals.

Refer clients to appropriate community-based programs and other social services based on the client’s service priorities.

Identify potential non-criminal legal needs connected to the client’s criminal case(s) and refer clients to the appropriate civil, family, and/or immigration partners for legal consultation and representation.

Depending on client needs and attorney preferences, assist clients with additional needs such as, but not limited to:

* Develop reentry or release plans
* Assist with program placement for behavioral health or substance use counseling
* Coordinate with employers to maintain employment while the client may be temporarily in custody or facing other obstacles that interfere with their employment
* Assist clients with retrieving property held by police or other agencies as a result of their arrest
* Navigate requirements to maintain or reinstate drivers’ licenses or other forms of identification
* Enroll in school or other educational/vocational programs
* Provide information, resources, or other educational insight to attorneys and clients on social services that may be relevant to the client’s service goals

**PERSUASIVE MITIGATION** (optional for offices who conduct mitigation)

Conduct interviews with clients to collect information for biopsychosocial profiles.

Conduct interviews of clients’ families to collect social history information.

Gather mental health, medical, educational, and substance use treatment records.

Gather letters of support and other mitigation evidence for sentencing hearings.

Draft mitigation reports that summarize client histories, biopsychosocial profiles, and participation in services or other proactive steps being taken into persuasive narratives supporting improved client legal outcomes; testify to the same in court proceedings.

Advocate for clients in the criminal justice system by investigating, developing, and presenting information that supports alternative sentences.

Initiate and maintain a variety of resource materials, files, and records (digital and manual) related to case mitigation and information gathered

**OTHER DUTIES**

Maintain detailed knowledge of court processes and requirements, share information with clients and their families about the criminal legal process, and assist clients in overcoming barriers to meeting court requirements.

Collect and report data about working with clients using the public defender office’s case management system. Maintain accurate and specific case records and logs of assignments and tasks performed, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Partner closely with attorneys to support arguments for better legal outcomes, including providing relevant information and records and drafting persuasive narrative reports. Research, evaluate, and recommend alternatives to incarceration that would adequately address client needs and court requirements.

Appear in court for hearings to support clients and their family members, as needed.

Perform other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each primary duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities required.

**EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE**

**PATTERN I**

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor’s degree in social work, psychology, criminal justice, or a closely related field.

**NOTE:** Additional professional substance use treatment or casework experience may substitute for the education on a year-for-year basis.

**PATTERN II**

One year of full-time, professional experience in a social work or substance use disorder treatment setting.

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Knowledge of the criminal court system, community-based organizations, and social service providers.

Knowledge of and experience in culturally proficient practices and in managing a diverse client caseload.

Professional or personal knowledge of the local community, including the systems, agencies, institutions, and organizations that its residents interact with regularly.

Skill and experience in motivational interviewing and interacting with people from varying backgrounds and education levels, obtaining facts, and evaluating relevant information.

Proficiency in keeping frequent contact with clients, community-based organizations, service providers, and other partners to compile and review important, detailed, personal, and confidential information.

Ability to read and interpret technical documents, such as law enforcement reports, government or agency regulations, and legal opinions, rulings, or other related documents.

Ability to prepare and present clear, concise, and compelling written narrative reports and records.

Ability to defuse hostile or stressful situations through strong communication skills and to relate appropriately to people in times of emergency or crisis.

Ability to solve practical problems and deal with a variety of variables in situations where only limited standardization exists.

Ability to organize and prioritize caseloads, schedules, and work assignments.

Ability to work collaboratively as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Skills in Microsoft Office Suite and/or other appropriate programming.

**CERTIFICATES, LICENSES, REGISTRATIONS** as required.

**DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

In addition to the minimum qualifications, applicant screening will focus on the following desirable qualifications. Please list any of these qualifications you may have within the "Duties" section of the online application.

One year of experience working in a public defender office, Legal Aid office, public interest law organization, or similar setting; **OR**

One year of full-time experience providing client-centered social services within marginalized communities, such as public benefits enrollment, housing or healthcare navigation, or job readiness training.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the primary functions of this job. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, sit, use hands for delicate operations or handling, reach with hands and arms, talk, and hear.

**WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the primary functions of this job in normal office conditions. Occasionally, the position may require in-home or off-site visits. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.