



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Committee for Public Counsel Services

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Part time Position Posting

YOUTH ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT Social Services Advocate Hyannis Office

The Youth Advocacy Department is pleased to announce that a new office is being established in Hyannis, and a part time Social Service Advocate (SSA) position is open for this office.

The Youth Advocacy Department (YAD), the juvenile defender department of CPCS, is committed to ensuring that every indigent child in Massachusetts has access to zealous legal representation in delinquency and youthful offender cases from a diverse and ever improving community of juvenile defenders consisting of both private appointed counsel and staff public defenders. YAD provides leadership, training, support, and oversight to the indigent juvenile defense bar in Massachusetts. As youth in Massachusetts have a right to jury trials, YAD trial offices integrate the work of attorneys, a social service advocate (SSA), and an administrative assistant to fully address the legal and developmental needs of our clients.

Responsibilities:

The SSA works with the attorneys and other team members to get the best possible legal outcome for the child. The SSA will work with the client in the context of the attorney-client privilege. As part of working with the attorney on the pending legal case, the SSA identifies the social and clinical issues that preceded arrest and those that may result from court involvement. By offering the child a variety of clinical, educational, and social opportunities, YAD promotes positive youth development. As an integral member of the team, the SSA role includes bio-psychosocial interviewing and assessment, social history investigation, clinical case management, advocacy for clients within social service, court, and educational systems, family interaction and intervention, treatment and alternative sentencing planning, report writing, and making direct connections between clients and programs. This work occurs at all stages of the court process, from arraignment to disposition. The SSA will share responsibility with the Attorney-in-Charge of the office for facilitating the use of the Positive Youth Development Approach by the entire staff.

Interviewing and Assessment

- Conduct both brief and in-depth client bio-psychosocial interviews to obtain the client's personal history as well as an inventory of the client's strengths and needs.

- Assess needs and identify appropriate resources and interventions.
- Detail a client's personal history through collecting and analyzing all relevant records and interviewing client's family members and other personal and collateral contacts.
- Recommend the use of other experts for clients who require further evaluation.

Clinical Case Management and Client Advocacy

- Maintain close contact with client and his/her family throughout the duration of the delinquency case to build strong working relationships to increase the likelihood that client takes advantage of opportunities for diversion from commitment to DYS, meet conditions of bail release, assist defense team with defense, and prepare for court appearances.
- Assist defense attorney with retaining and preparing other experts for clients who require further evaluation (i.e., substance abuse, neurological, psychiatric).
- Advocate for clients with all relevant state and community-based education and service organizations.
- Transport clients to court, appointments, interviews, and services as needed.

Alternative Sentencing Planning and Accessing Services

- Collaborate with defense team members to develop defense strategies and alternative sentencing options.
- Gain comprehensive knowledge of local and statewide resources from private and public services systems. Work collaboratively with community-based and state service providers to foster partnerships that will enhance access to needed services for YAD clients.
- Access private and public social services and develop treatment plans as alternatives to DYS commitment/incarceration and for improved life outcomes for the client.
- Prepare written assessments, persuasive alternative sentencing and treatment plans, and Aid in Sentencing Memoranda to assist defense attorney in negotiating plea agreements and sentencing outcomes.
- Present informal and formal testimony during court proceedings.

Supervision of Interns

- Supervise graduate social work students and other interns who have expressed an interest in forensic social work or child advocacy.
- Work with social work schools and other university programs to develop internship placements.

Minimum Qualifications

Education

Master's degree in social work, psychology or related field strongly preferred

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Experienced in working with children and families, preferably within communities of racial or linguistic minorities.
- Knowledge of social, psychological, economic, legal, and medical factors that impact children and their families.
- Skilled in client interviewing, assessment, case management, and treatment planning.
- Skilled in interacting with persons of various social, racial, cultural, economic, and educational backgrounds.

- Knowledge of public and private social services systems and resources, especially those serving children and teens.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively and persuasively orally and in writing.
- Proven ability to work effectively independently and as part of a team.
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships within the office and the service provider community.
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple clients and responsibilities.

Employment Conditions

- Part time position with an approximately 17.5 - 20 hour (2.5-3 weekdays) per work week with occasional evenings and weekends on a case by case basis.
- Must have insured, reliable available transportation and a valid driver's license.
- Must have no criminal convictions.

Salary:

The salary for this position is based on experience.

Range \$34,517.86 - \$52,212.68 per year, based on full-time status. Salary would be pro-rated based on actual hours.

Application

Persons interested should submit a written statement of interest and a resume. Please note that the start date will depend on the availability of office space. Applications should be submitted electronically by January 3, 2012, to:

Eva Chan
Youth Advocacy Department
echan@publiccounsel.net

This office is an equal opportunity employer.

The agency actively seeks to diversify its workforce.

Date of posting: December 20, 2011.