

Public Defender Association Civil Survival Project Staff Attorney

Summary

Civil Survival (CSP), a project of the Public Defender Association (PDA), is looking for a reentry legal aid attorney to assist formerly incarcerated individuals across Washington State who face legal barriers to successful reentry. The Staff Attorney will offer reentry legal representation to clients, plan and manage reentry legal aid clinics and mass assistance events, provide trainings to legal professionals and impacted communities, and create self-help materials.

Organization Description

The Public Defender Association advocates for justice system reform and develops alternatives that shift from a punishment paradigm to a system that supports individual and community health. Grounding reform in a public health and safety framework, PDA develops new strategies and implements models that improve on conventional responses to crime and public order issues. In collaboration with community and government partners, PDA uses policy advocacy, organizing, litigation, and public education to achieve its goals.

Under the umbrella of PDA, CSP organizes people who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system to build connections, gain knowledge and increase political participation. CSP provides leadership development, legal education and services, and legislative advocacy on systemic issues that prevent former justice-involved individuals the opportunity to fully reintegrate.

Location

PDA's office is located in Seattle, WA. Although the office remains open for necessary in-person work, staff currently work largely remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Occasional in-person work may be required if necessary to provide legal services. If in-person work is required, PDA will provide all appropriate personal protective equipment. Travel within Washington may be required.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, PDA may return to in-person work, adopt a hybrid model, or remain primarily work-from-home. Individuals from all locations in Washington are encouraged to apply. Applicants from outside of the Seattle metropolitan area will be able to continue remote-work indefinitely.

Job Description

The Staff Attorney will provide legal services across a variety of legal areas, including legal financial obligation (LFO) remission, criminal record vacation, sex offender registration relief, and applications for certificates of restoration of opportunity (CROP). In addition to providing direct legal services, the Staff Attorney will create systems to provide more efficient legal services delivery, such as legal guides, training for pro bono attorneys and impacted communities, as well as legal clinics and mass assistance events such as Legal Financial Obligation Reconsideration Days. The attorney will work closely with a small team.

The ideal candidate will be excited to directly assist client with reentry legal aid needs, while also creating and managing systems, such as legal clinics, that offer opportunities for widescale assistance. Experience in reentry legal aid is preferred, but not required. Strong candidates will have experience managing legal assistance programs and relationships with key external stakeholders, including court personnel, other attorneys, and communities directly-affected by the criminal legal system. The ideal candidate will be motivated to help those most frequently disadvantaged by the criminal legal systems including those with disabilities, people of color, and individuals who face greatest barriers to self-advocacy.

Qualifications

- Member, in good-standing, of the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA); or ability to quickly obtain APR 8(c) admission, with full WSBA admission by Summer 2021.
- The ability to independently and efficiently learn new legal practice areas and offer representation with a high level of competence.
- An understanding and empathy with the stresses experienced by clients who are impacted by poverty, mental illness, disabilities, unstable housing, substance use disorder, domestic strife, and other barriers. Ability to help these clients engage in their own representation through the principles of harm-reduction—meeting clients where they are, in a way that is responsive to their specific needs.
- Demonstrated cultural competence and sensitivity in working with diverse clients, communities, and colleagues.
- Strong ability to work collaboratively is required. The successful applicant will have strong conflict management skills and be able to tactfully engage with external partners.
- Reentry legal aid experience is preferred, including: record vacation/sealing, sex offender registration relief, legal financial obligation remission, obtaining certificates of restoration of opportunity, and driver's license reinstatements.
- Experience creating self-help materials and presenting self-help trainings to impacted communities is preferred.
- Experience creating and managing legal aid clinics and managing volunteer attorneys is preferred.
- Familiarity and strong relationships with local policymakers, community leaders, and marginalized communities are preferred.

- The ideal candidate will have experience that prepares them to create new service delivery models, such as criminal record vacation days, that efficiently provide high quality legal services to clients.

Compensation

Salary range is \$69,576-\$82,862, depending on experience. Salary increases 6% annually, up to \$117,546, although PDA has paused step increases due to the COVID-19 emergency. An additional annual cost of living increase is provided at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Benefits include:

- 401k match of up to 4% of salary, beginning after six months of employment;
- Annual, 2% of salary, profit sharing contribution to 401k, provided in most years;
- Generous medical and dental benefits for employees and family members;
- 15 days vacation, accrued annually, increasing to 24 days vacation, accrued annually;
- 12 personal days, accrued annually;
- Unlimited ORCA card; and
- Monthly \$50 employer cell phone contribution.

This is a Fair Labor Standards Act exempt, at-will position; continuation in the position depends on both performance and funding.

Equal Opportunity Employer

PDA is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and fosters an environment free of barriers and discriminatory practices. PDA actively promotes mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity. PDA is committed to maintaining an organization whose staff, Board and clients are diverse in background, experience, race, color, national origin, gender, age, religious affiliation, marital status, sexual identity, sensory, mental or physical abilities, veteran status, and other qualities that strengthen the program while reinforcing its commitment to basic fairness. People of color, those directly impacted by the criminal justice system, people who identify as queer, trans, lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and those with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Individuals needing a reasonable accommodation for the application or interview process should contact Julie Musgrove at julie.musgrove@defender.org or (206) 641-5334.

How to Apply

Submit the following to Julie Musgrove at julie.musgrove@defender.org by March 19, 2021 at 11:59 pm:

- Letter of interest
- Resumé
- Two legal writing samples, unedited by others
- Names and contact information for three references