Job Description:
DEFENSE INVESTIGATOR

The Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights, a nonprofit law office that defends young people in Louisiana’s juvenile justice system and serves as the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, seeks a skilled and committed investigator to find and develop the material that assists in defending our clients against delinquency charges. Investigators collaborate closely with trial lawyers, social workers, and youth advocates in LCCR’s multidisciplinary model of team-based advocacy. The work of investigators is carried out mostly in the field – in private homes, in schools, in businesses, and on the street – and requires creativity, perseverance, empathy, responsibility, and excellent communication skills.

Organizational Overview

The Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights is a nonprofit law center that defends the right of every child in Louisiana’s juvenile justice system to fairness, dignity, and opportunity.

Our Children’s Defense Team is the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, using an innovative model of holistic, cross-disciplinary advocacy to help vulnerable youth achieve their legal and life goals in nearly 1,000 cases each year.

Our policy reform and impact litigation arm is called the Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana. JJPL has 17 years of experience fighting for a juvenile justice system that is fair, compassionate, and supportive of positive youth development. We have closed down prisons, helping to reduce Louisiana’s incarcerated youth population by 75%; established a state constitutional right to rehabilitation and treatment; and passed legislation that fundamentally reshaped the state’s juvenile justice system by requiring the provision of key evidence-based supports to vulnerable children.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of defense investigators include:

- Working closely with staff attorneys and other defense team members to determine the scope, timing, and direction of defense investigation;
- Identifying, locating and interviewing state and defense witnesses;
- Taking detailed witness statements;
- Forming and maintaining positive relationships with state and defense witnesses throughout the pretrial stages of a case;
- Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients and clients’ support networks;
- Reviewing and analyzing discovery, including police reports and other case documentation;
- Performing background checks on relevant witnesses;
- Examining, documenting, and photographing locations where clients have been arrested or crimes have occurred;

The Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women, people of color, LGBT persons, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.
- Preparing exhibits for trial;
- Testifying in court about work conducted in the course of investigation;
- Locating and collecting records;
- Serving subpoenas;
- Thoroughly documenting all work and all information gathered in detailed memorandum;
- Consulting with staff attorneys on investigation progress and results;
- Regularly visiting clients at home and in custody;
- Supervising interns, AmeriCorps members, and other non-permanent staff;
- Collaborating with other LCCR staff in strategic planning and implementation, and in realizing the office’s mission and vision through refinement of existing projects and new project development; and
- Other projects as directed.

Investigators must perform all duties in accordance with applicable law, ethical rules, and performance standards promulgated by LCCR and by the Louisiana Public Defender Board.

Investigators are directly supervised by the Supervising Attorney of the Children’s Defense Team.

Investigators will be provided with intensive training in areas including investigative techniques; applicable law; and relevant professional, ethical, and legal rules.

**Required Qualifications**

- Deep commitment to the defense of indigent youth and to LCCR’ client-directed ethic, which recognizes that all advocacy must be driven by the expressed interests of clients;
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including the ability to develop rapport with a wide range of people;
- Strong work ethic;
- Creativity and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges;
- Strong analytical ability;
- Strong writing skills;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver’s license and insurance;
- Willingness to submit to a background check;
- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age.

**Preferred Qualifications**

- Experience working with youth;
- Experience engaging, and building relationships with, strangers – for instance, community organizing, canvassing, and/or conducting interviews.
- Experience with techniques, principles, and methods used in criminal defense investigation;
- Familiarity with the geography, history, and people of New Orleans and Louisiana;
- Understanding of relevant law and of the juvenile justice system.
Compensation and Hours

The salary range for this position is $32,000 to $40,000 per year, depending on experience. Vacation, parental leave, and health benefits are provided. The position is full-time, and no outside, compensated work is permitted. Depending upon case and client needs, investigators can expect to be called upon to work some nights and weekends.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit: (1) a cover letter; (2) a resume or C.V., including an e-mail address and daytime and evening telephone numbers; and (3) a list of three professional references, including the name, address, telephone number and, if available, e-mail address of each.

The position will remain open until May 20, 2015.

Please do not call with inquiries. Submissions via email are preferred. Please place “Investigator Position” in the subject line of emailed submissions.

Applications should be directed to:

Ariel Test, Supervising Attorney
1820 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 205
New Orleans, LA 70130
jobs@lacrr.org