Job Description:

YOUTH ADVOCATE

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 Youth Advocate to provide case management, education advocacy, and other supports that can assist youth in New Orleans’ juvenile justice system in achieving their legal and life goals. Youth Advocates collaborate closely with trial lawyers, social workers, and youth advocates in LCCR’s multidisciplinary model of team-based advocacy. The work of Youth Advocates 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

Youth Advocates work as part of LCCR’s Client Services Unit to provide case management, education advocacy, and other supports that can assist youth in New Orleans’ juvenile justice system in achieving their legal and life goals.

The specific responsibilities of Youth Advocates include:

- Case Management:
  - Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients, providing ongoing support and mentorship, and being available to respond to clients’ evolving needs;
  - Making referrals, finding placements, and assisting with logistics, enrollment, and ongoing support to help clients and their families access needed services and benefits;

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Helping clients to comply with conditions of probation, parole, and supervised pre-adjudication release;
- Gathering educational, medical, and other records;
- Regularly visiting clients at home and in custody;
- Testifying in court, as needed.

- Education Advocacy:
  - Becoming and remaining familiar with educational options for youth in the New Orleans area, including both traditional schools and alternative educational opportunities;
  - Navigating school systems to find educational placements that will promote positive youth development;
  - Advocating for clients’ rights to effective special education services;
  - Representing clients at school disciplinary and expulsion hearings.

- Intake Interviewing of LCCR clients to assess needs and build rapport.

- Case Plan Development and Monitoring:
  - Participating in case planning meetings and assisting in the development and execution of comprehensive client service and reentry plans;
  - Regularly attending team meetings and assisting in the assessment of client progress and the responsive adjustment of case plans.

- General Office Responsibilities:
  - Consulting with staff attorneys and with social workers, as appropriate, on progress and results;
  - Thoroughly documenting advocacy efforts and outcomes;
  - Supervising interns, AmeriCorps members, and other non-permanent staff;
  - Collaborating with other staff in strategic planning and implementation, and in realizing the office’s mission and vision through refinement of existing projects and new project development;
  - Other projects as directed by LCCR’s Executive Director and Managing Director.

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

Youth Advocates are directly supervised by LCCR’s Managing Director.

Youth Advocates will be provided with intensive training in areas including communicating with clients; developmental psychology; navigating the school system in New Orleans; and applicable professional, ethical, and legal rules.

**Required Qualifications**

- Deep commitment to the defense of indigent youth and to LCCR’s 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 organizational skills;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver’s license and insurance;
- Willingness to use personal vehicle for work;
- Willingness to submit to a background check;

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Applicants must be at least 21 years of age.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working in the juvenile justice system or in similar settings with at-risk youth;
- Experience working with low-income clients and young people;
- Familiarity with developmental psychology, mental health issues, the Orleans Parish school system, and/or the geography, history, and people of New Orleans and Louisiana.

Salary and Compensation

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 other compensated work is permitted. Depending upon case and client needs, youth advocates can expect to be called upon to work some nights and weekends.

Application Instructions

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

The position will remain open until filled with a qualified applicant.

Inquiries and applications should be directed to:

Meghan Garvey
1820 St. Charles Avenue, Suite 205
New Orleans, LA 70130
jobs@laccr.org

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