

LIVINGSTON COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

SOCIAL WORKER – PUBLIC DEFENDER

Supervised By: Public Defender and Chief Assistant Public Defender

Supervises: No supervisory responsibility

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Position Summary:

Under the supervision of the Public Defender and Chief Assistant Public Defender works directly with clients-appointed adult indigent defense services within the Livingston County trial court system. Works collaboratively with Assistant Public Defenders to assist clients in connecting with housing, substance abuse, mental health, employment and other services during client-centered representation. Provides support for Assistant Public Defenders to advocate for reduced sentences and/or alternatives to incarceration.

Essential Job Functions:

An employee in this position may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions. These examples do not include all of the duties, which the employee may be expected to perform. To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential function satisfactorily.

1. Provides clinical expertise to support the legal positions presented in court.
2. Facilitates comprehensive psychosocial assessments in the community and local jails to determine clients' basic demographic information, living situation, relationship and family dynamics, legal status, education history, employment history, physical health, mental health, substance use history and self-identified goals and needs.
3. Attends collaborative meetings with the client and attorney, reviews case service plans, assists, coordinates, and initiates facilitated referrals to community treatment and other services for clients prior to sentencing to ensure rapid engagement in services.
4. Gathers factual mitigation data through interviews, and obtaining and analyzing records.
5. Identifies and conducts interviews with family, friends, employers and other support system members in the community who can aid in clients' success.
6. Based on a clinical review of assessment outcomes and interviews with family and other support systems, develops individualized alternative sentencing plans that, in consultation with the case attorney and client, recommend and advocate for community-based sentences and alternative community treatment as indicated.

7. Researches and recommends alternatives to incarceration through memoranda prepared for submission to judges and prosecutors through the Assistant Public Defenders.
8. Accompanies clients to court and participates in hearings, as requested by the defense attorney. Provides additional information and support, as required.
9. Maintains ongoing pre-trial or pre-sentence updates on clients' progress through communication and collected documentation from community service providers and by conducting routine check-ins with clients.
10. Fosters communication and connections with a wide array of community service providers while sustaining a comprehensive community referral network.
11. Completes special projects and other duties as assigned by the Assistant Public Defenders and/or the Public Defender.
12. Performs other duties as directed.

Required Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Minimum Qualifications:

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, abilities and minimum qualifications necessary to perform the essential functions of the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the job.

Requirements include the following:

- Bachelor's Degree with additional graduate work in social work, psychology, therapy or a related field and one to two years of social service experience.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.
- Michigan Vehicle Operator's License.
- Ability to access clients and witnesses in correctional facilities (may preclude employees and applicants arrested and jailed).
- Ability to testify in court without impeachment (may preclude employees and applicants convicted of certain crimes within the prior 15 years).
- Knowledge of local community organizations and resources, working with the state's offender program database, and applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.
- Skill in interviewing individuals and inmates, matching and assisting inmates to criminal justice and social work programs, and maintaining files.

- Skill in assembling and analyzing data and preparing comprehensive and accurate reports.
- Skill in effectively communicating ideas and concepts orally and in writing.
- Ability to utilize services of interpreters as necessary to communicate with clients, witnesses and other persons related to the case.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality with highly sensitive information.
- Ability to establish effective working relationships and use good judgment, initiative and resourcefulness when dealing with County employees, contractors to the County, representatives of other governmental units, professional contacts, elected officials, incarcerated individuals and the public.
- Ability to assess situations, solve problems, work effectively under stress, within deadlines, and in emergency situations.
- Skill in the use of office equipment and technology, including Microsoft Suite applications and County, court and state software databases.

Physical Demands and Work Environment:

The physical demands and work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to communicate in person and by telephone, read regular and small print, view and produce written and electronic documents, and enter data on a computer keyboard with repetitive keystrokes. The employee must be mobile in an office setting, stand, sit, stoop and kneel, use hands to finger, handle, or feel and reach with hands and arms. The employee must lift or push/pull objects of up to 15 lbs. without assistance. Accommodation will be made, as needed, for office employees required to lift or move objects that exceed this weight.

The typical work environment of this job is a business office or court setting where the noise level is quiet and sometimes moderate but the employee must also periodically travel to other sites including the jail. The employee may be exposed to situations in which unsanitary or unhygienic materials, individuals and locations are encountered in the course of performing required duties.