

STAFF SOCIAL WORKER (Public Defender)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: The work involves the performance of social work in helping clients of the Cattaraugus County Public Defender with social, emotional, and related issues associated with their situations in a Client Centered law practice. The work also involves facilitating resolution of disputes among lawyers and courts involving complex emotional and interpersonal dynamics. The work is performed within prescribed routines with some leeway permitted in determining the scope of work to be performed in helping clients to adjust into their old or new environments. Work in this position is administered with respect for the confidentiality of client matters as required under applicable ethical guidelines for Attorney-Client Privilege and Client Confidentiality. An incumbent works under the direction of the Public Defender who may define or limit the work to be performed. Employees in this class are expected to meet with professionals or agencies in or outside the community to obtain assistance and guidance for clients. A Staff Social Worker (Public Defender) does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Participates in the intake and screening of new clients, evaluating and diagnosing clients in a variety of locations including jail facilities, courts, residences and offices;
- Participates in early entry into client matters as part of team approach to Counsel at First Appearance;
- Assists attorneys with bail advocacy;
- Collaborates confidentially with the legal team;
- Reviews psychological, medical, educational, and other records of clients and clients' families;
- Prepares and writes briefs of clients' social circumstances and histories to be used by attorneys in representation of clients, including for use in plea negotiations;
- Serve as a liaison to government and non-government agencies providing, or that are able to provide, services to clients;
- Refers clients to governmental and non-governmental agencies;
- Coordinates clients' access to treatment and assistance with issues including housing, employment, benefits, counseling, etc.;
- Obtains timely status reports and/or evaluations required for court proceedings;
- Maintains information on community and health resources which can be utilized during the client's case;
- Provides social work services to help clients in their personal/family/legal situations;
- Compiles case studies, recording pertinent information;
- Attends/participates in Service Plan Reviews in Family Court Neglect and Abuse matters;
- Assists attorneys in sentencing advocacy and investigates client sentencing issues;
- Evaluates effectiveness of recommended courses of action and performs client follow through in both criminal and family court cases;
- Provides professional insight and/or recommendations to the legal team regarding the situation of clients;

- Collects and maintains appropriate data from various sources such as professional staff and clients' families/friends to establish an overall approach to the solution of clients' mental and social problems;
- Assists clients/witnesses in trial preparation and support;
- Provides assistance/guidance in re-entry, as appropriate.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS, ABILITIES, AND PERSONAL

CHARACTERISTICS: Good knowledge of modern social work principles and practices; good knowledge of federal, state and local laws related to the provision of social work services; good knowledge of criminal justice and family court systems; good knowledge of mental health, substance abuse and parenting systems and services; ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing; ability to work as part of a team; ability to organize and maintain accurate records and files; ability to analyze and organize data and prepare records and reports; physical condition sufficient to perform the essential functions of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Possession of a Master's Degree in Social Work and current certification or limited permit to practice social work in New York State issued by the New State Department of Education.

NOTE: Your degree must have been awarded by a college or university accredited by a regional, national, or specialized agency recognized as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Secretary of Education. If your degree was awarded by an educational institution outside the United States and its territories, you must provide independent verification of equivalency. A list of acceptable companies who provide this service can be found on the New York State Civil Service website. You must pay the required evaluation fee.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Possess and maintain a driver's license to operate a vehicle in New York State and availability of an appropriate vehicle in meeting the transportation requirements of the job.

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE

Adopted: 11/18/16

Revised: 7/15/22