



TITLE: Forensic Social Worker

The Criminal Practice has two Forensic Social Worker positions available in the Defender Services Program (DSP). New York County and Kings County (Brooklyn, NY)

MAJOR PURPOSE OF POSITION

While working closely with the CP attorneys, the FSW's primary role is to interview clients with the goal of gathering a life history to highlight mitigating circumstances such as mental illness, drug addiction, trauma and/or chronic poverty leading to a client's involvement in the criminal justice system. They will then advocate for an alternative to incarceration, or lesser sentence, based on mitigating factors. The FSW will evaluate and clients and recommend a treatment program. The FSW will fill out necessary paperwork and provide supporting documents to facilitate a client's interview with a program and/or to assure a client's acceptance into a program. The FSW educates the client about treatment options, offers crisis intervention, and short term counseling. The FSW provides essential information to attorneys about clients.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- Interview the client, performing a thorough bio-psycho-social assessment. During this process, crisis intervention, brief treatment, or short term counseling may also be performed.
- Identify and interview collateral sources of information. Collateral interviews are done with family members, friends, teachers, social workers, community members, and others connected to the client.
- Request, review, and analyze life history records (i.e. school, medical, psychiatric) in order to document specific arguments within written reports.
- Develop casework plans in conjunction with the attorneys, develop alternative sentencing plans, and provide advocacy in court.
- Assess a client's readiness for treatment and makes referrals to substance abuse treatment, domestic violence, mental health counseling, shelters, etc.

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SECONDARY DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- Other duties as assigned

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong diagnostic skills with a background emphasis in working with clients with the following special needs: MICA clients, clients with physical illnesses and physical disabilities, clients with mental illness, mental retardation, and developmental delays, and clients with histories of substance abuse.
- Ability to interface with Judges, District Attorneys and Correctional Personnel
- Ability to negotiate with community based treatment centers
- Ability to write persuasively
- Strong organizational skills
- Strong computer skills
- Ability to work within a team model
- Candidates must have an MSW degree and NYS certification in social work (LMSW)

Applications, including a letter of interest, resume, writing sample, copy of license, and list of three references, should be submitted to:

John F. Volpe, LCSW
Interim Director of Social Work for the Criminal Practice
The Legal Aid Society, Criminal Defense Division
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The Legal Aid Society is an Equal Opportunity Employer – Women, People of Color, Gays and Lesbians, Transgender People, Veterans and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.