



METROPOLITAN PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES, INC.

JOB DESCRIPTION

SECTION ONE – POSITION INFORMATION

Classification Title:	Social Worker
Department:	Multnomah, Washington, Parent/Child Advocacy or Community Law
Supervised by:	County Director
FLSA:	Exempt
Union Representation:	AFSCME Public Defenders Local 3668
Grade:	6
Salary:	\$58,236 - \$74,326

SECTION TWO – SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

The Social Worker will receive general supervision from assigned management staff. This position does exercise dotted line supervision over Case Manager(s) and BSW/MSW social work intern(s) on assigned cases.

SECTION THREE – POSITION SUMMARY

Social workers are embedded within the public defense structure to build and initiate community based treatment plans for criminal defendants. Defense-based social workers have assisted in reducing recidivism and allowing the best use of limited system resources, both programmatic and incarcerative. Following a holistic defense approach, our Social Workers improve upon the traditional model along five dimensions:

1. **Upstream.** The work begins with a comprehensive intake on the first day of representation. Traditionally, defense-based social workers only start building an alternative sentence once the defense attorney fully understands the case. Moreover, our program moves key planning and assessment tools upstream in the criminal justice process. Taken together, the combined resources available early in the process are a powerful opportunity for behavioral change.
2. **Outcomes-focused.** The work will focus on gaining the buy-in of the client and creating the plan most likely to result in decreased recidivism and increased housing, health, and relational and financial stability. The person-centered goals will run parallel to (but not necessarily the same as) the case-centered focus of the defense attorney, whose job is often to convince a judge or DA to

agree to an alternative sentence, even if that means including wasted resources or counter-productive measures to make the sentence appear sufficiently retributive.

3. **Collaborative.** Our program leads with an unusually high degree of collaboration between systems partners. While some limitations will arise from the Social Worker being under the umbrella of the attorney-client relationship, we have already seen that most of the time the incentives drive a highly participatory process with community justice and behavioral health systems working together with the defense and other justice system stakeholders toward a common goal.
4. **Population-based.** Social Workers would work with all defendants within a specific population, rather than taking referrals from case attorneys of a particular office. **Initial populations will include women and young adult men (18-24).** This will allow the program to more easily compare datasets across time and place while minimizing selection bias. It is the intent of the program to seek constant, iterative improvement in efficacy.
5. **Comprehensive in scope.** Social Workers will work within a team of multi-disciplinary lawyers and Case Managers who can provide wrap-around legal services. They would also have access to the nearly two dozen social service organizations in the community. Ultimately, the individualized plans will be as comprehensive as they need to be to have the greatest chance of succeeding.

SECTION FOUR – ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The essential duties of this position include, but are not limited to, the following elements which require a Social Worker to provide:

- Conducts comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments to build a plan that has the highest likelihood of improving outcomes for the person and the community, including lower recidivism, improved health and stable housing, finances and relationships.
- Engages clients and increases buy-in by utilizing tools such as motivational interviewing or assertive engagement and by utilizing models such as trauma-informed care and harm reduction.
- Builds out and implements plans with clients, personally connecting with individuals at organizations in the community and arranging for treatment, services, and resources.
- Conducts baseline and 12 month follow up interviews for program monitoring and evaluation
- Facilitates collaboration between behavioral health, community health, the treatment community, social service organizations and justice system stakeholders to support rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and promote public safety.
- Provides education to justice system stakeholders on complex substance abuse and behavioral health issues.
- Enters data in management information system and completes all other documentation practices as needed.
- Develops and maintains procedural manuals and resource maps.

SECTION FIVE – NONESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Maintain availability to other staff members for consultation and education; participate in training programs; maintain current knowledge of appropriate support functions.
- Participate actively in the performance appraisal process, staff meetings, office committees, projects and training, as required.
- Maintain accurate, complete and legible case files.
- Other duties, as assigned.

SECTION SIX – EQUIPMENT OPERATED

Computer, telephone, fax, postage meter, and networked copiers, printers, and scanners.

SECTION SEVEN – JOB SPECIFICATIONS

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE:

Must have at least five years of experience directly serving clients in a social service or treatment context, at least 3 years of which is post-MSW experience as a social worker.

Must have some experience working with people undergoing crises resulting from behavioral health issues or addiction issues.

Must have experience advocating for individuals not engaged in medical, addictions treatment and behavioral health care systems, including those who have been terminated from services in the past;

Must have a demonstrated passion for constant and iterative program and systems improvement.

Must have a demonstrated skill in persistence and persuasion to achieve positive outcomes for individual clients.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE

Familiarity with and relationships within social services and resources in the Portland area, including addictions treatment, behavioral health treatment and housing.

Experience in motivational interviewing, assertive engagement or a similar technique.

Experience in biopsychosocial assessment and planning.

Familiarity with health care terminology, management, payment and utilization.

Familiarity with issues that arise from a lack of stable housing.

Familiarity and comfort with a racial equity lens.

EDUCATION:

A Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW).

LICENSURE:

Licensed as an LCSW in the State of Oregon or working towards LCSW.

Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license

KNOWLEDGE

- English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Proper telephone etiquette.
- Basic usage of modern office equipment and Microsoft Office software.
- Basic mathematical principles.
- Principles and practices of working safely.

SKILLS

- Skill in operating a computer to search, update, correct, and retrieve information.
- Skill in communicating orally and in writing with a variety of people, gathering and exchanging information.

- Skill in typing (proficient at 35 words per minute with 100% accuracy)
- Skill in operating typical office equipment such as office phones, cell phones, computer, fax, calculator, printer, copier, scanner, digital video and digital cameras.

ABILITIES

- Ability to deal effectively with people of widely divergent backgrounds, within and outside the office, and to relate empathetically to clients and their special needs.
- Ability to exercise common sense and good judgment.
- Ability to use current office software to log note in client files.
- Ability to use current office software to meaningfully manage case documents.
- Ability to maintain an accurate and current calendar using current office software.
- Ability to learn quickly and function efficiently under stressful and distracting conditions; ability to multi-task.
- Ability to deal confidentially with highly sensitive information.
- Ability to accept direction and follow office policies and procedures.
- Ability to comprehend and efficiently address complex legal issues.
- Ability to observe, remember, recall and communicate detail accurately and completely.
- Ability to deal competently and appropriately with the unexpected.
- Ability to effectively communicate verbally in English including ability to communicate effectively with judges and juries.
- Ability to work independently as well as cooperatively in a legal services team.
- Ability to utilize services of interpreters as necessary, to communicate with clients, witnesses and other persons related to cases.
- Ability to balance the responsibility of leading a team while participating as a team member.
- Ability to bring personal background and experiences to the office which will enable MPD to better represent clients and which will enable the employee to better participate within the office culture.
- Ability to deal constructively with stress; ability to recognize signs of stress in co-workers and take appropriate action.
- Ability to maintain any hand-written log notes in a legible fashion and to prepare documents for transcription.
- Ability to access clients and witnesses in correctional facilities (may preclude employees and applicants arrested and jailed in preceding two years.)
- Ability to testify in court without impeachment (may preclude employees and applicants convicted of certain crimes within the prior 15 years).
- Ability to travel to the courthouse and other criminal justice system facilities to contact clients, witnesses and to appear in court; ability to travel to other case related locations to gather information.

SECTION EIGHT – PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS
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Work is generally sedentary, in an office setting, courthouse, field location or jail facility. There are frequent requirements for some physical activity such as carrying boxes of records weighing up to 10 pounds, stooping to extract records from files, or carrying and setting up display easels in court.

Must have visual acuity, clear speech and keen hearing.

SECTION NINE – WORK ENVIRONMENT
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The work environment is friendly, team-oriented, cooperative and respectful. Regular and predictable attendance is a requirement of the job.

APPROVALS & REVISION DATES

Created: November 20, 2017

Revised: January 27, 2021

Approved by:

Carl Macpherson, Executive Director

Mary Bruington, County Director

Greg Scholl, Capital Team Director

Kristine Constans, Human Resources Manager