LOUISIANA CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

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Children's Defense Team: New Orleans Juvenile Defense Social Worker (LMSW or LCSW)

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) seeks a social worker to case management services for children in New Orleans's juvenile justice system in collaboration with their public defense team.

Organizational Overview

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) is a non-profit law office that fights to keep children out of the justice system so they can thrive in their homes and communities. We both represent individual children in their court cases and address the systemic issues that trap mainly poor, Black youth in the justice system.

Juvenile Defense: As the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, our Children's Defense Team represents over 90% of children in the city who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. We provide each child with a holistic team – a lawyer, social worker, investigator, and youth advocate – to address both the causes and consequences of an arrest.

Juvenile Life Without Parole: We represent the majority of Louisianans who are facing or serving life without parole sentences for crimes they committed as children, which the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unconstitutional in all but the rarest cases. We know that children can and do change for the better, so we fight for their second chance.

State and Local Advocacy: We advocate for policies that reduce the number of children in the justice system and provide better alternatives to arrest and incarceration. For the kids who do enter the system, we support policies that keep them safe, protect their rights, and get them home as soon as possible.

Position Responsibilities

- Interviewing clients and performing assessments to determine clients' psychiatric/psychological, social, emotional, and educational needs;
- Gathering and analyzing information through records collection and collateral interviews including interviews of parents, guardians, and other relevant family members;
- Providing crisis counseling as needed;
- Providing education advocacy to clients in schools and at the district including attending IEP meetings, disciplinary hearings, and expulsion hearings;
- Developing case plans driven by clients' expressed interests and goals, including sentencing plans that present the court with compelling alternatives to incarceration, and plans for provision of services on release from incarceration;

- Helping client implement case plan;
- Being familiar with relevant service providers – including community-based providers of mental health care services, job training, counseling, and housing – and conducting site visits to assess the quality of service providers and their suitability for clients;
- Being familiar with the range of benefits that may be available to clients and their families, and connecting families to benefits;
- Making referrals, finding placements, and assisting with logistics and enrollment to help clients and their families access needed services and benefits;
- Evaluating client progress towards service plan goals, and counseling clients to help ensure that goals are met;
- Advising attorneys and other staff on issues within the expertise of social workers, including family dynamics, trauma, adolescent development and psychology, the use of standard social work assessment tools, and available community-based services;
- Assisting attorneys in working with, or preparing to confront, expert witnesses in fields related to the social worker's area of expertise;
- Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients and their families;
- Maintaining regular contact with clients, including regularly visiting clients at home and in custody;
- Testifying in court, as needed, and assisting in the preparation of presentations to judges and other decision-makers;
- Preparing written dispositional and release plans for clients
- Thoroughly documenting all work and all information gathered;
- Conducting intake with clients and families;
- Collaborating with other LCCR staff in strategic planning and new project development;
- Assisting in project evaluation and assessment;
- Assist in fundraising throughout the year including documenting success stories, participating in office wide events, talking to donors about the work and participating in individual fundraising projects.
- Other projects as directed by LCCR' Executive Director and/or Director of Client Services.

Social workers 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.

Social workers are responsible, in accordance with rules promulgated by the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners, for timely obtaining and properly maintaining licensure and/or certification to practice master's level social work. Social workers will be provided with ongoing training in areas of importance to their job, including applicable professional, ethical, and legal rules.

Required Qualifications

- Deep commitment to the defense of indigent youth and to client-directed advocacy;

- Ability to commit to a minimum of two years in the position;
- Excellent interpersonal and interviewing skills, and the ability to develop rapport with a wide range of people;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Thorough understanding of social, psychological, medical, economic, and legal factors that affect adolescent behavior;
- Strong clinical skills;
- Strong analytical skills;
- Strong work ethic;
- Creativity and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges;
- Graduate-level social work degree from an accredited school of social work;
- Licensure or certification to practice masters-level social work in Louisiana (LMSW/LCSW), or eligibility to obtain such certification or licensure in the immediate future;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver's license and insurance;
- Willingness to submit to a background check;
- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working with youth;
- Familiarity with developmental psychology, mental health issues, trauma impacts on children, the New Orleans public schools, and/or the geography, history, and people of New Orleans;
- Understanding or experience with the juvenile justice system;
- Experience in special education advocacy;
- Familiarity with the array of community-based resources in New Orleans available to children in the juvenile justice system;

Salary and Compensation

The position offers a salary of $42,000 (for first year LMSW) to $70,000 depending on years of experience and based on an established pay scale. LCCR offers employee benefits that include generous paid time off, health insurance, and parental leave. The position is full-time, and no other compensated work is permitted.

To Apply

Please provide resume, cover letter, writing sample and list of three references in a **single document** to csuhiring@lakidsrights.org.

The position will remain open until filled.

LCCR values diversity and is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. People of color, women, LGBT persons, people with disabilities, and those directly impacted by the justice system are encouraged to apply for all positions.