



CUYAHOGA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Chief Public Defender – Cullen Sweeney

ATTORNEY POSTING

May 7, 2024

Job Title: Community Engagement Attorney

Department: Public Defender

Reports to: Deputy Chief Public Defender

Salary: \$90,000 minimum
(Commensurate with experience)

POSITION DESCRIPTION: The Cuyahoga County Public Defender's office is committed to advocating for criminal justice reform and to improving individual and community access to criminal legal resources and education. The Community Engagement Attorney will, in collaboration with the Chief and Deputy Chief Public Defender, develop a community outreach strategy to promote the mission of the Public Defender. The Community Engagement Attorney will lead the Office's efforts to engage in community events, collaborate with partners in criminal justice reform efforts, offer criminal legal education and advice in the community, and provide early representation prior to the assignment of counsel.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Community partnerships and events

- Identify and develop programming designed to reach marginalized individuals within the communities we serve.
- Foster local and national relationships with service providers, stakeholders and partners in the indigent defense community
- Attend meetings and neighborhood events to represent the Public Defender Office and ensure our presence is impactful
- Lead the Public Defender's work at neighborhood and community events to assist individuals with collateral consequences from criminal convictions
- Assist with Public Defender social media content

Criminal justice capacity-building and reform

- Identify practices or institutional issues that can be challenged with litigation and pursue those in conjunction with Assistant Public Defenders
- Engage neighborhood groups in discussion about policy change and reform within the criminal justice space to effectuate legislative changes
- Oversee the development of an internship program designed to engage high school and undergraduate students;



Early representation and legal advice in the community

- Develop community office hours to improve access to legal assistance from the Public Defender's Office
- Respond to requests for legal assistance from individuals with criminal issues who contact the Public Defender's Office
- Work to identify an early representation framework within the office to ensure clients receive assistance as soon as possible within the criminal justice system
- Assist with early representation practices for clients
- Provide legal assistance in courts throughout Cuyahoga County and engage with law enforcement on behalf of clients

QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT:

- Admitted to practice in Ohio or have the ability to waive into the Ohio bar
- A minimum of 5 years of legal experience
- Strong preference for prior experience in indigent criminal defense
- Strong preference for prior community engagement or volunteer experience
- Experience working in and with racially and socioeconomically marginalized communities
- Commitment to social justice and defending the rights of indigent individuals charged and convicted of crimes
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues of race, poverty, mental health, and substance abuse as they relate to the criminal justice system
- Availability on weekends and evenings to attend meetings, community events and other engagement activities;
- Preference for bilingual abilities with prior experience translating in a legal setting
- Prior experience with community engagement or volunteer experience
- Prior supervisory experience with high school or undergraduate students
- Significant legal research, writing, and oral advocacy skills and experience
- A demonstrated capacity to work creatively and collaboratively on legal issues confronting our indigent clients

Proof of up to date COVID-19 vaccination required for employment.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

All applications must be submitted by **May 31, 2024** at 4:30 p.m. and must include the following:

- A cover letter
- A resume
- Three references

- A letter addressing the following questions:
 - Identify and describe the three most significant issues facing indigent defendants in the criminal justice system
 - How to effectively engage and reach the communities we serve to identify and solve criminal justice related problems
 - How to educate the public on the work done by the Public Defender's Office
 - Identify a way to increase educational opportunities with young students in Cleveland surrounding know your rights campaigns and creating an interest in public service careers.

These materials should be addressed to the Chief Public Defender Cullen Sweeney and sent by email or mail at:

Cuyahoga County Public Defender
Courthouse Square
c/o Maria Pollman
310 W. Lakeside - Suite 400
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

If sending via email, please direct to: SM-PD-Employment@cuyahogacounty.us

Reasonable accommodation is available to all employees and applicants. If you have a disability that needs to be accommodated, please contact the Department of Human Resources/ADA Coordinator at (216) 443-7190.

Equal Opportunity Employer – Smoke-free and Drug-free workplace.
All job offers are made with the understanding that prospective employees pass a drug test and a criminal background investigation prior to being hired.

<http://publicdefender.cuyahogacounty.us/>