

Service Opportunity Data Sheet

Mennonite Voluntary Service



Jubilee North – Rochester NY

Position Title: Sentencing Mitigation Specialist

Organization/Agency Name: Monroe County Public Defender's Office

10 North Fitzhugh Street
Rochester NY 14614
Tel 585-753-4210
www.monroecountypublicdefender.com

The Agency

The Monroe County Public Defender's Office is an office of 60 attorneys and 23 support staff that represents indigent individuals in the courts within Monroe County, including the City of Rochester and the towns and villages within the geographical boundaries of the County. This area has a population of approximately 700,000 people. The Office handles cases in the town and village justice courts; Rochester City Court; Monroe County and Supreme Court; Monroe County Family Court; New York State Appellate Division and New York Court of Appeals. Last year the Office represented approximately 25,000 people in these courts.

Our goal is to provide to the poor who are accused of a crime, or who are entitled to representation in family court, truly competent legal representation which is at least equal to that which they would expect to obtain from privately retained counsel. An individual's constitutional rights must be protected regardless of his or her financial circumstances.

The Job

This full-time position is within the Superior Court Section of the Criminal Trials Division of the Monroe County Public Defender's Office. The Criminal Trials Division is staffed with forty-one (41) attorneys, four paralegals, and six administrative assistants. The Superior Court Section consists of twenty-one (21) attorneys who represent clients charged with felony offenses. Each year, the Superior Court Section represents approximately 2500 clients charged with committing one or more felony offenses, or of violating the terms of their probation. The majority of these clients who are convicted after trial (or who are found to have violated the terms of their probation) face the possibility of a state prison sentence. Other sentence options include a local jail sentence or a period of probation supervision.

The Sentencing Mitigation Specialist would work with the attorney representing the client to obtain relevant information and prepare a sentencing memorandum to the sentencing court advocating for a sentence that would best accomplish the rehabilitative goals of penal sanction. The Sentencing Mitigation Specialist would also assist attorneys during the underlying criminal trial.

The Sentencing Mitigation Specialist would assist the attorneys in the following:

- obtaining information from a variety of sources (i.e., family members, school records, treatment records) relevant to sentencing;

- assisting staff in conducting thorough interviews of our clients to determine information relevant to sentencing;
- assisting staff in the preparation of sentencing memorandums to present to the sentencing court to advocate for an appropriate sentence;
- assisting the felony trial attorney outside the courtroom and between court appearances and during the trial of the underlying criminal action by communicating with the client and defense witnesses,
- assisting the attorney in working with various drug treatment providers, mental health treatment providers, alternatives to incarceration workers, and other “providers” in fashioning an appropriate treatment plan in lieu of a sentence of incarceration.

The Qualifications

- B.A. or higher or equivalent training in social work, education, psychology, sociology, or related field
- Must have a valid driver's license
- Must have a sensitivity to the problems and concerns of the indigent
- Strong organizational skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with a team dedicated to helping indigent clients