



Prioritizing love and compassion over judgment and shame.

Mitigation Specialist

Salary Starting at: \$65,000

Kalamazoo Defender is an independent non-profit organization that provides legal representation to the adult indigent population charged with a crime within Kalamazoo County. We take a holistic approach, employing compassionate professionals who work with our clients to identify and address additional needs beyond their legal case. In collaboration with our robust network of area service providers, we aim to connect our clients to relevant support services.

Our mission is rooted in the conviction that poverty and various forms of discrimination put our clients on inequitable footing within and beyond our criminal justice system. Our job is to be their zealous defender in the face of these systemic barriers, fighting for them in court but also organizing care for them in our community.

THE JOB:

The Mitigation Specialist plays a pivotal role in Kalamazoo Defender's holistic defense model, collaborating with both attorney and non-attorney staff to analyze, develop, and present mitigation evidence on behalf of clients. Ideal candidates for this role are Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSWs) who are self-motivated, open-minded, and deeply attuned to the challenges faced by the justice-involved population. They are dedicated to seeking out information, critically analyzing data, and effectively communicating their findings.

Responsibilities include gathering and synthesizing social history records through comprehensive interviews, establishing and nurturing relationships with relevant parties, and consulting with subject matter experts. The Mitigation Specialist compiles and analyzes data from multiple clients to identify recurring themes and develop effective strategies for sentence mitigation. Additionally, they prepare detailed mitigation reports and must be prepared to testify in court proceedings. Furthermore, the Mitigation Specialist will be responsible for providing licensure supervision to team members seeking licensure.

In essence, the Mitigation Specialist is a key player in delivering holistic defense services, fostering collaborative and empathetic communication between clients and their defense team.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Foster and sustain meaningful relationships with clients, their families, various service providers, and subject-matter experts.
- Assist in investigating, analyzing, developing, summarizing, and presenting mitigation evidence from clients' life histories.
- Conduct interviews with clients' family, friends, community members, and other individuals.
- Identify and collaborate with appropriate experts to obtain reports and prepare for hearings,

enhancing the depth and credibility of defense strategies.

- Obtain, analyze, and summarize clients' medical, mental health, social, and school records to corroborate mitigation arguments.
- Prepare detailed reports gathered through interviewing, research, and record collection.
- Maintain organized and accurate records, updating databases, calendars, and files to ensure efficient case management and compliance with legal requirements.
- Assist in data collection and analysis to inform strategic decision-making.
- Conduct thorough research of mitigating themes to provide evidence-based support to client stories.
- Provide licensure supervision to team members seeking full licensure.
- Prepare for and provide compelling court testimony, effectively communicating findings and evidence to support clients' cases.
- Perform any other duties as assigned, contributing to the overall effectiveness and success of the defense team.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Strong commitment to Kalamazoo Defender's mission and values.
- Licensed master's degree in social work and two years of specialized experience in social science, research, or mitigation is required.
- Working knowledge of the criminal justice system, mental health, and other social services.
- Skill in working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrated commitment to working in an anti-racist workplace.
- Commitment to professionalism, confidentiality, compassion, and integrity.
- Experience working with and advocating for individuals from marginalized communities.
- Detail-oriented with outstanding organizational skills.
- Ability to locate, obtain, review, analyze, and summarize relevant records.
- Excellent interviewing, verbal and written communication skills; writing and presentation skills.
- Ability to produce clear, concise, and effective materials in multiple formats and for multiple audiences.
- Ability to prioritize projects while working both independently and collaboratively.
- Experience conducting research and applying findings effectively to support case strategies.

- Demonstrated skills in documentation, scheduling, communications, and general office procedure, including familiarity with Microsoft Office Suite.
- Ability and willingness to travel.
- Familiarity with the local population served by Kalamazoo Defender, and the local agencies that intersect with that population is strongly desired.

BENEFITS:

- Competitive salary, superior health care coverage, generous retirement contributions, ample paid time off, robust employee assistance program, and optional FSA account.
- An opportunity to work with like-minded, mission driven individuals in a dynamic and innovative holistic legal program, backed by a county capable of maximizing Kalamazoo Defender's mission.
- Children enrolled in Kalamazoo Public Schools may participate in the Kalamazoo Promise, which can provide free or reduced college tuition.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please send your resume, a cover letter, and a writing sample to Jobs@KalamazooDefender.org or to the following address:

Kalamazoo Defender
Attn: Human Resources
151 S Rose St
Ste 300
Kalamazoo, MI 49007