

ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER: MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender seeks a dedicated and zealous litigator to serve as an Assistant Public Defender in the Mental Health Division (MHD). MHD protects and advances the rights of indigent persons with mental illness in civil involuntary commitment proceedings. MHD represents criminal defendants committed to state hospitals pursuant to a finding of not criminally responsible (NCR) at subsequent release hearings. MHD also represent clients before administrative law judges, and in in court trials, jury trials and appellate hearings throughout the state. The Agency's vision is for *Justice, fairness and dignity for all*. Employees are committed to the core values of a culture of excellence, client-centered representation, and tenacious advocacy and are united as a team in achieving the Agency's mission.

OVERVIEW OF THE POSITION

The involuntary civil commitment of an indigent client to a psychiatric hospital is a severe curtailment of liberty that cannot be accomplished without due process of law. An Assistant Public Defender in the MHD combines demonstrated dedication to the representation of indigent clients with strong leadership and litigation skills to ensure the highest standard of representation on behalf of all MHD clients. An attorney in this position is expected to work independently in managing an active MHD caseload while simultaneously working in a team-oriented environment focused on a client-centered approach to litigation. Representation of MHD clients includes: representation at involuntary commitment and release hearings before administrative law judges; appeals of administrative decisions; and representation at release hearings before judges and juries across the state. The attorney in this position will have an office located in Towson, Maryland but will be providing representation across the State of Maryland excluding the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland (except on rare occasions). We will consider candidates at all experience levels for this position.

PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Zealous representation of MHD clients at every stage of the case.
- Ability to competently, independently and resourcefully prepare for and manage an active, fast-paced caseload of administrative, appellate and district and circuit court hearings.
- Actively and capable communicate with clients suffering from major psychiatric illnesses, family members, medical professionals, other hospital staff, law enforcement officers and social workers.
- Continuously seek professional development through trainings, continuing legal education, and advocacy courses.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Demonstrated commitment to zealous and comprehensive advocacy to protect and advance the rights of individuals with mental illness.
- Strong advocacy skills (prior litigation experience -including jury trial experience-strongly preferred).
- Exposure to mental health issues in civil or criminal cases (knowledge of DSMV preferred).
- Ability to work in a fast-paced, team-oriented environment.
- Ability to work independently and effectively manage an active caseload.
- Active membership in good standing within the Maryland Bar or bar of another state by start date.*

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this position please submit a: (1) current resume, (2) cover letter addressing the above qualifications, (3) list of references, (4) completed Applicant Essay (available on our website under "Careers"), and (5) if out of law school less than 3 years, law school transcript. Items (1) – (5) outlined above must be submitted electronically in **one email** to attorneyjobs@opd.state.md.us. In the subject line of the email please indicate "APD, Mental Health Division." Incomplete applications will not be considered.

CLOSING DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

The OPD is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to building a culturally diverse staff and strongly encourage people historically underrepresented in the practice of law to apply. Assistant Public Defenders are full-time employees who serve at the pleasure of the Public Defender. Criminal Procedure Art., Section 16-203(d). They cannot engage in the private practice of law while in this position.

* Individuals who are members of the bar of another state must be admitted to the Maryland Bar within 18 months of start date.