



## **PANEL SOCIAL WORKER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Maryland Office of the Public Defender (OPD) is looking for licensed social workers to provide the social work component to the team of professionals defending adult and juvenile clients in criminal matters as well as parents involved in the child welfare system. OPD has opportunities for experienced forensic social workers, particularly those with an expertise in adolescent development and the juvenile justice system, additionally, licensed social workers looking to develop forensic social work practice skills are encouraged to apply.

Defense-based Forensic Social Workers work alongside public defenders to advocate on behalf of indigent clients in the criminal justice, juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems. Social workers are a critical element of the team-based client-centered representation model utilized by OPD. This is a specialized area of social work practice involving the application of psychosocial theories, social work skills, and the legal system. Social workers working in this capacity may be tasked with conducting psychosocial evaluations for mitigation purposes, assessing and linking clients to evidence-based services and or when needed integrating those services into pretrial, sentencing, or alternative sentencing plans. As a CEU certified site by the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners, OPD provides training, professional development, and support to those looking to develop and grow their forensic social work practice skills.

There is no minimum amount of hours required and once approved for the panel, the social worker can determine the volume and geographic jurisdictions for the cases they will be assigned. Hourly compensation rate is determined based on the candidate's licensure level and expertise.

### **Primary Duties and Responsibilities**

- Under the direction of the defense attorney, and working as part of the defense team conduct assessments and compile psychosocial histories to develop recommendations for appropriate pretrial release, detention, treatment options, conditions of probation or diversion and sentencing and post-sentencing options.
- Document and interpret symptoms of mental and behavioral impairment to assist the defense in developing case strategies throughout various stages of the legal proceedings.
- Participate in pretrial, adjudication and sentencing hearings as necessary including preparing reports
- Assessing and linking clients to appropriate community-based resources as required.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- Current licensure as a LMSW, LCSW or LCSW-C.
- Experience working with vulnerable populations in multiple settings.
- Experience writing social histories, testifying in court, and working in a forensic social work setting.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with clients and their families, witnesses, mental health experts, and coworkers.

### **Application Procedure**

If you are interested in being part of our dynamic panel team, please submit a cover letter addressing the preferred qualification and describing your passion for this work along with your resume to [Terri.Green@maryland.gov](mailto:Terri.Green@maryland.gov).