



**YOUTH ADVOCATE**  
**CLIENT AND INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES UNIT**  
**CHILDREN'S DEFENSE TEAM**

**Job Description:** Work within a holistic defense team to advocate and support children at the juvenile public defender for Orleans Parish.

**Salary:** \$40,000- with yearly raises up to \$65,000.

**Must Have:** Deep commitment for youth facing court involvement in New Orleans with the ability to communicate well with young people and their families.

**Start Date:** As soon as possible.

### **Organizational Overview**

*The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights values diversity and is an equal opportunity /affirmative action employer. Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, people who are LGBT, people with disabilities, and those directly impacted by the justice system are encouraged to apply.*

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) fights to keep children out of the justice system so that they can thrive in their homes and communities. We represent both individual children in their court cases and address the systemic issues that trap marginalized youth in the justice system.

**Juvenile Defense:** As the juvenile public defender in New Orleans, our Children's Defense Team represents over 90% of children in the city who come into contact with the juvenile justice system. We provide each child with a holistic team – a lawyer, social worker, investigator, and youth advocate – to address both the causes and consequences of an arrest.

**Juvenile Life Without Parole:** We represent the majority of Louisianans who are facing or serving life without parole sentences for crimes they committed as children, which the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unconstitutional in all but the rarest cases. We know that children can and do change for the better, so we fight for their second chance.

**State and Local Advocacy:** We advocate for policies that reduce the number of children in the justice system and provide better alternatives to arrest and incarceration. For the kids who do enter the system, we support policies that keep them safe, protect their rights, and get them home as soon as possible.

### **Impact of COVID**

Our physical office has been closed throughout the pandemic. Currently, as permitted by our organization's COVID policies and the City of New Orleans COVID policies surrounding city contractors, authorized staff are allowed to make use of our office environment. All other staff are working remotely to serve the needs of our clients during this difficult time. Fieldwork has resumed on a supervisor approved basis, following all recommended personal safety precautions, including visiting clients in their homes and in secure care. We will fully resume our office opening

and regular field activities when it is safe in consultation with staff and current local, state, and federal guidelines.

### **Position Responsibilities**

The Youth Advocate uses mentorship and case management to help clients reach their goals in court and in the community.

The responsibilities of Youth Advocates include:

- Implementing comprehensive case plans for clients, created by the multidisciplinary team and driven by the clients' stated interests and goals;
- Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients and families, providing ongoing support and mentorship, and being available to respond to clients' evolving needs;
- Assisting social worker in making referrals, finding placements, assessing referrals for quality, and coordinating logistics and enrollment to help clients and their families access needed services and benefits;
- Collaborating and building strong relationship with community stakeholders (schools, programs, internships, jobs, etc.) to support our clients;
- Being familiar with available schools and alternatives to traditional school for youth in the New Orleans area; assisting clients, including those with special education needs, and families navigate school systems to find the most appropriate for each client;
- Gathering educational, medical, and other records;
- Testifying in court, as needed;
- Regularly visiting clients at home, at school, and in custody (currently being done remotely);
- Completing intake process with clients and families;
- Consulting and communicating with LCCR staff, as appropriate, on progress and results electronically and in a timely manner;
- Transporting clients to appointments or court dates as needed as well as developing comprehensive transportation plan for the client;

### **Reporting Relationships**

The Youth Advocate is supervised by the Director of Client & Investigative Services Unit.

### **Required Qualifications**

- A belief in the potential and talent of all kids, and an awareness of how racism shapes this work and our clients' experiences;
- Deep commitment to the defense of youth and to LCCR' client-centered ethic, which recognizes that all advocacy must be driven by the expressed interests of clients;
- Ability to work well in a team;
- Ability to develop rapport with clients, family, and legal team members;
- Ability to work independently with the desire and determination to work hard in timely meeting their client's expressed goals;
- Strong attention to detail in daily work, including scheduling and meeting a complex set of demands;

- Creativity, critical thinking, and flexibility in helping clients solve problems and meet challenges;
- Basic computer literacy skills;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver's license and insurance; and the ability to drive children and families throughout the area;
- Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and meet federal background requirements in working with youth.
- Must be willing to make, at least, a 2 year commitment to the position.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- Familiarity with developmental psychology, mental health issues, the Orleans Parish school system;
- Lived experience/ knowledge of the geography, history, and people of New Orleans and Louisiana;
- Having knowledge of the different community programs/resources that can help / assist our clients to be successful;
- Experience working with young people in New Orleans;
- Experience with anti-racist trainings and practices;
- Understanding of relevant law and of the juvenile justice system;
- Bachelor's Degree

### **Salary and Compensation**

The position offers a salary of \$40,000 with yearly pay raises up to \$65,000 depending on education and experience, along with full benefits that include paid vacation, paid sick leave, health insurance, and parental leave. The position is full-time, and no other compensated work is permitted.

### **To Apply**

Please send a cover letter, resume, and a list of three references in a single document to [mnunez@lakidsrights.org](mailto:mnunez@lakidsrights.org).