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[lakidsrights.org](http://lakidsrights.org)

## JLWOP STAFF ATTORNEY

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) seeks an experienced and highly motivated staff attorney as a critical team member of LCCR's *Miller* defense team. The JLWOP Staff Attorney will directly represent children and adults convicted as children who face life without parole sentences in pretrial, sentencing and re-sentencing litigation. This is an opportunity for a highly motivated individual to play an integral role in the development of best practices for defense teams representing children who face life without parole sentences in Louisiana. Strong candidates will have significant litigation and in-court experience; familiarity with capital and/or *Miller* litigation and mitigation investigation; substantive knowledge of adolescent development and the jurisprudence surrounding children in the adult justice system, including those who face life without parole sentences; strong oral and written advocacy skills and the ability to communicate effectively with a range of people.

### Organizational Overview

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) is a non-profit law office that fights to keep children out of the justice system so they can thrive in their homes and communities. We both represent individual children in their court cases and address the systemic issues that trap mainly poor, Black 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.

### Position Responsibilities

The JLWOP Staff Attorney will directly represent children and adults convicted as children who face life without parole sentences. The JLWOP Staff Attorney will at times act as lead counsel and at other times as co-counsel, partnering with defenders in the jurisdictions where their client's case is being prosecuted. In all cases, the JLWOP Staff Attorney will take responsibility for ensuring that every client receives high quality and zealous defense in accordance with the

Louisiana Performance Standards for Attorneys Representing Juveniles in Life Without Parole Cases, the American Bar Association Guidelines and national best practices.

The JLWOP Staff Attorney may also be asked to contribute to other strategic litigation opportunities undertaken by LCCR with respect to juvenile life without parole sentences; and will also be asked to contribute to the strategic vision of the project, including the direction of legislative advocacy.

Specifically, the JLWOP Staff Attorney's responsibilities will include:

#### *Zealous, Client-Centered Representation*

- Play a leadership role in setting the tone and standard amongst other defense team members for zealous advocacy;
- Ensure that the defense team is properly comprised of all needed staff and skills;
- Advocate zealously for the expressed interests of clients;
- Build strong relationships of trust with clients, visiting and communicating with clients regularly, keeping clients informed of case developments, consulting with clients on questions of strategy, and counseling clients fully to allow them to make informed decisions about their cases;
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with all defense team members.

#### *Litigation*

- Develop, in coordination with other defense team members, a comprehensive case plan and strategy, planning carefully and preparing thoroughly for every proceeding;
- Ensure a thorough fact and mitigation investigation is completed in every case;
- Litigate legal and factual issues alike with skill and tenacity, maintaining a robust motions practice, seeking relief from appellate courts, and taking advantage of expert assistance wherever appropriate;
- Negotiate with district attorneys and judges for favorable outcomes.

#### *Holistic Advocacy*

- Coordinate a team of advocates – including co-counsel or second chair lawyer, a fact investigator and a mitigation investigator – to implement holistic and comprehensive advocacy plans designed to help clients achieve their goals;
- Communicate regularly and effectively with team members, providing direction where appropriate while recognizing that every team member has a vital role to play in effective advocacy for clients;
- Where appropriate, litigation planning should incorporate a plan for re-entry.

#### *Administrative and Program Responsibilities*

- Participate in annual statewide *Miller* training and other trainings as appropriate;

- Adhere to office policies regarding meetings and communication;
- Prioritize responsibilities and use resources effectively and efficiently;
- Thoroughly document advocacy efforts and outcomes;
- Carefully keep electronic and paper records, case files, calendars, activity logs, case lists, and timesheets, and perform other administrative tasks as directed;
- Supervise law clerks and interns as appropriate;
- Collaborate with other LCCR staff in strategic planning and implementation and in realizing the office's mission and vision through refinement of existing projects and new project development;
- Join with other staff on systemic reform efforts when direct representation tasks permit;
- Assist in project evaluation and assessment;
- Other duties as directed by the Legal Representation Director.

All LCCR staff must perform all duties in accordance with applicable law, ethical rules, and the performance standards promulgated by LCCR and by the Louisiana Public Defender Board.

The JLWOP Staff Attorney will report directly to the project's Legal Representation Director.

## Qualifications

- A Juris Doctorate with current good standing to practice law;
- A minimum of three years of experience in criminal defense practice is preferred;
- Experience litigating capital cases and / or *Miller* cases, including the development and presentation of mitigation evidence is strongly preferred;
- Courtroom experience and strong oral advocacy skills;
- Strong issue spotting and research and writing skills;
- Substantive knowledge of adolescent psychology, adolescent development, mental health and other areas of knowledge important for effective advocacy on behalf of youth in the criminal justice system;
- Deep and demonstrated commitment to indigent criminal defense; Excellent oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, the ability to work well in a team-based, client-centered approach, and the ability to communicate effectively with diverse populations;
- Strong work ethic and willingness to work late hours and/or weekends when circumstances demand it;
- Driver's license and access to vehicle for use in local travel and cell phone.

## Salary and Compensation

The salary for this position is between \$50,000 and \$80,000 depending on years of experience and based on an established pay scale. LCCR offers employee benefits that include 20 paid vacation days, nine paid sick days, three paid mental health days and an annual mental health stipend, 100% employer covered health insurance (including children or a spouse), annual raises, paid bar dues, and training/conference opportunities, and flexibility with remote work. The position is full-time, and no other compensated work is permitted.

## To Apply

Applicants must submit: (1) a resume or C.V., including an e-mail address and daytime and evening telephone numbers; (2) a sample redacted legal brief, pleading or motion (3-5 pages); and (3) a list of three professional references to [krome@lakidsrights.org](mailto:krome@lakidsrights.org). The position will remain open until filled.

**LCCR values diversity and is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. People of color, women, LGBT persons, people with disabilities, and those directly impacted by the justice system are encouraged to apply for all positions.**