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Social Worker, Children's Defense Team

The Louisiana Center for Children's Rights (LCCR) seeks a Social Worker for the East Baton Rouge Client Services Team. The role's primary responsibility is to ensure – through direct client services and practice management – that the social workers, youth advocates and social work interns on the team provide high-quality, client-directed support for every eligible youth in East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court. The Social Worker is additionally tasked with representing LCCR's interest within juvenile justice reform through participating in working groups, task forces, system-wide meetings, etc.

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.

Specifically, the Social Worker's responsibilities include:

Direct Representation

- Represent a caseload of youth in juvenile delinquency and Families in Need of Services proceedings, providing high-quality, zealous, client-directed support.
- Interview clients to assess needs and determine goals.
- Perform psychosocial and other assessments.
- Provide crisis response and mediation.
- Assist attorneys in communicating with clients and others with whom effective communication requires specialized skills.

- Develop service plans, including dispositional and reentry plans, and assessing client progress under those plans.
- Make referrals, find placement, and assist with logistics/enrollment to help clients and their families access needed services and benefits.
- Maintain regular contact with programs providing services to LCCR clients, monitoring service quality and client progress.
- Provide expert consultation and advice to attorneys and other staff on issues including client family dynamics, adolescent development and psychology, the use of standard social work assessment tools, and available community-based services.
- Advocate for clients' education rights in non-judicial forums, including at expulsion hearings.
- Gather educational, medical, and other records relating to the work of client services staff.
- Be available in the event of staff and/or client emergencies/crisis to provide assistance and support to social workers, youth advocates, and/or clients as needed. Communicate with supervisors about emergencies as needed.
- Adhere to administrative compliance, and ensure the timely and accurate collection and analysis of efforts and outcomes data. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring note and file accuracy, reviewing caseload spreadsheets and weekly outputs.

Required Qualifications

- Deep commitment to the defense of indigent youth and recognizes that all advocacy must be driven by the expressed interests of clients;
- Excellent interpersonal and interviewing skills, and the ability to develop rapport with a wide range of people;
- Strong analytical ability;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Thorough understanding of social, psychological, medical, economic, and legal factors that affect adolescent behavior;
- Strong work ethic;
- Creativity and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges;
- Graduate-level social work degree from an accredited school of social work;
- LMSW, licensure or certification to practice masters-level social work in Louisiana, or eligibility to obtain such certification or licensure in the immediate future;
- Car ownership, or daily use of a car, with a valid driver's license and insurance;
- Willingness to submit to a background check.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working with low-income clients and young people;
- Familiarity with developmental psychology, mental health issues, the Baton Rouge public schools, and/or the geography, history/people of Baton Rouge and Louisiana;
- Understanding of relevant law and of the juvenile justice system.

Salary and Compensation

The position offers a salary of \$45,000-\$72,000 depending on years of experience and based on an established pay scale. LCCR offers employee benefits that include generous paid time off, health insurance, and parental leave. The position is full-time, and no other compensated work is permitted.

To Apply

Please provide a resume, cover letter and three professional references, explaining your interest in the position to jobs@lakidsrights.org. In subject line of the email, please write "Social Worker". Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and 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.