SOCIAL WORKER – IMMIGRATION PRACTICE
THE BRONX DEFENDERS, CIVIL ACTION PRACTICE

BACKGROUND

The Bronx Defenders – an innovative, progressive, community-oriented indigent defense office in the South Bronx – seeks social workers to join our immigration practice.

The Bronx Defenders is a multi-service public defense organization dedicated to addressing the underlying issues that lead to involvement with the criminal and family justice systems. The Bronx Defenders’ collaborative approach brings together interdisciplinary work groups combining criminal defense and civil lawyers, social workers, investigators, and family court advocates to address not just the immediate criminal or family court case, but also the host of issues that drive individuals into the system. The Bronx Defenders has gained national and international notoriety for advancing this Holistic Defense model. To learn more, please visit our website at www.bronxdefenders.org.

Our immigration practice is housed within the Civil Action Practice, which provides comprehensive legal services to our clients and their families by fully integrating civil representation with our criminal and family defense practices. Our goal is to minimize the severe and often unforeseen fallout from criminal and family proceedings and facilitate the reentry of our clients into the community. Our civil staff attorneys provide comprehensive advocacy to help our clients resolve civil legal problems such as barriers to housing, eviction, employment, public benefits, police misconduct, criminal record errors, and disability.

The Bronx Defenders pioneered the model of integrated criminal defense and immigration representation over a decade ago. Immigration attorneys are part of interdisciplinary teams of advocates (lawyers, social workers, legal advocates and investigators) who work closely with clients charged with misdemeanors and felonies in Bronx County Criminal and Supreme Courts, as well as, those accused of abuse and neglect in Bronx County Family Court. Immigration attorneys at The Bronx Defenders additionally represent clients in deportation proceedings, provide affirmative immigration services, and pursue community-based systemic reform litigation and advocacy aimed at reforming federal immigration laws. Since November 2013, our immigration attorneys have also served as assigned counsel at the Varick Street Immigration Court under the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project, the first-ever universal representation project.
POSITION DESCRIPTION

Social workers are an integral part of interdisciplinary teams of advocates working collaboratively to provide high quality, holistic representation to indigent clients accused of crimes in Bronx County or facing deportation in Immigration Court. Strategizing with lawyers and other advocates, social workers assist clients with those issues causing contact with the Criminal Justice system. Using an ecological framework, social workers are responsible for conducting assessments, making referrals to treatment programs and social service providers, as well as working with attorneys throughout the pendency of the criminal case. In detained deportation cases, social workers will travel to visit clients in ICE detention in New Jersey to assess competence, conduct assessments for submission to Immigration Court, testify in immigration proceedings, and assist immigration attorneys with communicating and advocating on behalf of those clients. Social workers at The Bronx Defenders must have strong organization skills, excellent time management, an ability to work collaboratively with a thorough knowledge of the issues underlying criminal justice involvement for poor and under-served populations.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Crisis Intervention
- Interviewing and assessing clients.
- Writing psychosocial assessments.
- Assisting with client-attorney communication.
- Providing supportive counseling to clients and their families.
- Connecting clients with a wide variety of social services and benefits.
- Advocating for and appearing on behalf of clients in Criminal Court and Immigration Court
- Writing mitigation memoranda for judges and prosecutors
- Visiting clients at NYC jail facilities, treatment programs and immigration detention centers.
- Cultivating relationships with community programs and social service providers.
QUALIFICATIONS

- Masters in Social Work from an accredited Graduate School of Social Work
- A demonstrated interest working with clients with criminal justice system contacts who often have histories of trauma, issues related to substance abuse, as well as and are experiencing mental illness, as well as a demonstrated interested working with immigrant populations.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Strong written advocacy skills
- Spanish fluency or high proficiency is required as the job requires frequently working with monolingual clients in the Spanish language without access to interpretation.
- A two year commitment to working at The Bronx Defenders

Interested and qualified applicants should submit a résumé and cover letter (preferably in one document addressed to “Hiring Committee”) via email by Friday, October 10th, 2014. Applications should be emailed to jobs@bronxdefenders.org with the words “IMM Social Worker” in the subject line. Each Applicant will be notified after the deadline whether or not an invitation to interview with The Bronx Defenders will be extended. APPLICATIONS WITHOUT COVER LETTERS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE BRONX DEFENDERS JUSTICE CAMPUS IN BRONX, NEW YORK.

The Bronx Defenders is an equal opportunity employer: People of color; women; people with disabilities; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people; and people with personal/familial experience with the criminal justice and family court system are welcome and encouraged to apply.