



Job Posting

Deadline: May 26, 2024

State Appellate Defender Office
3031 W. Grand Blvd., Ste. 450, Detroit, MI 48202

www.sado.org

@sadmich | @sadoreentry

Youth Defense Research and Training Attorney

Hybrid (Remote/Office)

Job Summary

Join Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) as our first-ever Youth Defense Research and Training Attorney, working statewide to help attorneys improve outcomes for children navigating the juvenile delinquency system. The Research and Training Attorney will be a part of SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center (CDRC), supporting the CDRC's mission to train and support the criminal defense bar. The position pays from \$64,728 to \$131,397, depending on experience. Our office follows a hybrid workplace model that mixes in-office and remote work to offer flexibility and support to staff. This position is for either the Detroit or Lansing office.

Why Michigan?

In the last couple of years, Michigan has seen ongoing efforts to reform its youth justice system. In 2021, the Governor formed a Juvenile Justice Task Force, charged with analyzing Michigan's juvenile justice system and recommending changes to improve outcomes for children and their families. The Task Force found problematic policies that were not based on recent research and best practices. Among other [recommendations](#), the Task Force suggested the formation of a statewide juvenile public defense system and minimum standards. One of the first steps Michigan took to fulfill this recommendation was to adopt [legislation](#) in 2023 that allows SADO to represent children on appeal. Trial-level youth defense improvements are also underway.

As a member of SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center, SADO's first-ever Youth Defense Research and Training Attorney will work closely with SADO's first-ever Assistant Youth Appellate Defender and the Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel Youth Defense Attorney to be part of monumental change in Michigan. Together, the Research and Training Attorney and Youth Defender will be at the forefront of establishing fundamental rights for children brought into the system. The Research and Training Attorney will take the lead on developing resources and support for Michigan's developing youth defense practice.

Job Responsibilities

The primary role of the Youth Defense Research and Training Attorney will be to develop high-quality training programs, resources, model pleadings, and support to attorneys representing Michigan's children in delinquency proceedings. The Youth Defense Research

and Training Attorney, when time permits, will also represent young people on their direct appeals or for other post-disposition proceedings. Job responsibilities include:

- Develop and conduct training events for criminal defense attorneys throughout the state, partnering with other training providers, including the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, the Criminal Advocacy Program of Wayne Circuit Court, the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission, and local bar associations
- Train youth defenders on how to use available resources
- Develop resource books and manuals on topics of youth defense
- Develop and maintain databases providing legal resources to practitioners
- Investigate, develop, and litigate novel and cutting-edge legal arguments to advance and expand the rights of young people in contact with the youth justice system
- Provide research and respond to legal questions posed by attorneys for case consultation and prepare appellate and trial court briefs and motions
- Work to identify and advocate for solutions to systemic issues
- Prepare “at a glance” and “frequently asked question” content and documents for children and their families regarding the youth system
- Screen, approve, and organize briefs, pleadings, appellate decisions, and a variety of other relevant legal materials for inclusion in the database
- Work collaboratively with team and community resources to assist Michigan youth and their families in matters related to housing, education, school discipline, mental health, and other collateral matters that contribute to deepening system involvement
- Continuously seek professional and personal development through trainings and skills courses.
- Provide occasional legal representation to children in youth appeals.

Qualifications

- Applicants must be current members of the Michigan Bar or eligible to waive into the bar
- Applicants must have a demonstrated commitment to youth defense, indigent defense, public service, and racial equity
- The ideal candidate will have experience representing children in delinquency proceedings and be an experienced youth defense trainer; youth public defense experience is preferred
- Knowledge, training, and experience related to adolescent development, neuroscience, education, mental health treatment, and best practices for rehabilitation of children
- Experience developing training content, programs, and publications
- Skills in legal research and writing, client communication, and oral advocacy
- Proficient and advanced technological skills
- Ability to communicate effectively with people of different backgrounds and lived experiences and proven expertise in communicating with children and adolescents

About Us

SADO attorneys work in trial courts and appellate courts across the state to achieve tangible results for the people we represent and to improve the system. We strive to show the courts that each person we represent is more than a case number and is entitled to equitable treatment and justice. We focus on our clients as people and actively work to challenge injustices and disparities in the criminal legal system based on race, class, ability, behavioral health, and other identifying characteristics and statuses.

This position is new to SADO as traditionally we have only represented individuals in adult court. The Research and Training Attorney will join SADO's Criminal Defense Resource Center and integrate into SADO's existing structure and mission of obtaining just outcomes for our young clients. For the past 47 years, an essential part of SADO's mission has been to provide resources through support services and training to assigned criminal defense attorneys.

- **Resources:** The CDRC produces resources accessible on SADO's website. Some of the most popular include defender books and manuals, appellate decision summaries, a brief bank, the Criminal Defense Newsletter, databases containing expert witness transcripts, and Self-Help Resources covering child support, expungement, collateral consequences, pro per representation, and sample pleadings.
- **Training:** The CDRC hosts dozens of free online and in-person training events annually for both trial and appellate practitioners and other criminal legal system stakeholders. These trainings include separate monthly programs for trial attorneys and defense investigators, and each program is consistently well-attended and highly evaluated. Trainings are recorded and archived on SADO's website for later viewing. The CDRC team also provides individualized trainings to its subscribers around the state.
- **Subscriber support:** The CDRC has always provided support to its subscribers, responding to ad hoc questions about legal and procedural issues. As the CDRC's subscriber base has grown – since the advent of the MIDC, the number has increased three-fold, from ~600 to ~1,800 – so too have the number of subscriber questions.

Benefits

State employee benefits are comprehensive and include:

- Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
- 401k plan with up to a 9% employer contribution
- 13 paid holidays
- 3 weeks of paid vacation in year one
- Paid sick time and, for eligible employees, paid parental leave
- Long-term disability insurance
- Flexible work hours

- Hybrid work environment (remote/office)
- Paid training opportunities

SADO employees are members of the UAW Local 2200.

To Apply

Submit a cover letter stating your interest in the position. Include your resume and a redacted writing sample.

Writing Sample Special Instructions: As part of its commitment to diversity in the workplace and its goal to prevent hiring bias, we ask that applicants submit redacted writing samples, which will be reviewed without access to applicant information and scored based on objective criteria. Your name, address, work affiliation, and other identifiers should be redacted from your writing sample. Files should be named generically, and your name should not be a part of the filename. For example, you can name the file WS1.pdf or WritingSample.pdf.

Applications should be emailed by May 26, 2024, to hr@sado.org and include “Job ID 04-2024” in the subject line.

SADO is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We recognize people of color are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system and actively seek to employ staff with backgrounds representative of the people we represent and the defense community. We strongly encourage people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQ people, and people directly affected by the criminal legal system to apply. A felony conviction does not prohibit employment at SADO.

If you have questions about this application or are unable to send application materials electronically, please contact Human Resources at 313-420-2942.

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