



Job Posting

Deadline: July 14, 2024

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

www.sado.org

@sadmich | @sadoreentry

Mitigation Specialist

Hybrid (Remote/Office)

Job Summary

Join Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) as a full-time Mitigation Specialist to assist in legal representation of individuals sentenced to life without parole as youth. SADO represents clients throughout Michigan on appeal of their felony convictions. Starting salary will depend on experience and qualifications. The salary range is \$50,385 to \$78,362 with annual pay increases until the top of the range for satisfactory performance.

SADO's Juvenile Lifer Unit advocates for individuals who are serving unconstitutionally cruel and unusual life without parole sentences for crimes committed as youth and who are now entitled to resentencing proceedings and for an opportunity for freedom from incarceration. Mitigation Specialists are a crucial part of the defense team and work with attorneys and clients to develop strategies for new sentencing hearings. The Mitigation Specialist will perform a variety of functions with the end goal of helping to obtain release for our clients. These resentencing proceedings, which generally occur years, if not decades, after the conviction and original sentencing, require intensive long-term mitigation investigation, and culminate in complex resentencing hearings.

Juvenile Lifer Unit mitigation specialists are supervised and trained by the Mitigation Specialist Supervisor. This position can be based out of SADO's Detroit or Lansing office.

Mitigation Specialists draw from a diverse range of professional, academic, and life experiences to inform their work. Mitigation specialists must be empathetic communicators, effective interviewers, curious investigators, critical readers, data managers, creative writers, compassionate listeners, and zealous advocates. At SADO we are dedicated to building a multi-disciplinary team with diverse perspectives and experiences, so if you are excited about this role but you do not meet every qualification in this job description, we encourage you to apply anyway. You may be the right candidate for the job.

Job Responsibilities

Specific duties include, but are not limited to:

- Interview, and build rapport with incarcerated clients to learn about their background, the facts of the offense, current experiences while incarcerated, and specific needs upon release;
- Identify, locate, and interview family, friends, community members, and other

- individuals to compile material in mitigation of sentence;
- Travel extensively throughout Michigan and occasionally out of state to visit clients in prison and interview witnesses
 - Obtain, analyze, and summarize records and documents, including prison records, social files, school records, and medical and mental health records;
 - Prepare reports, including client and witness interview memos, social history reports, and sentencing memoranda, using creative writing and storytelling techniques;
 - Work with SADO's Project Reentry to help identify support for clients transitioning back into the community;
 - Identify and consult with appropriate experts to obtain reports and prepare for hearings;
 - Prepare clients for testifying in court or presenting allocution;
 - In limited circumstances, testify in court;
 - Train attorneys and staff on mitigation and parole hearings; and
 - Assist attorneys with general hearing preparation such as preparing exhibits, coordinating with witnesses, attending court hearings, and other necessary tasks.

Qualifications

- Commitment to client-centered, zealous advocacy;
- Commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of clients;
- Commitment to cultural humility and cultural competency;
- Education and/or experience in social work, social sciences, psychology, forensic psychology, journalism, anthropology, criminal justice, or a related field;
- Knowledge of the criminal legal system, preferably in Michigan;
- Experience in investigation;
- Excellent communication, trauma-informed interviewing, and interpersonal skills;
- Understanding of mental health signs and symptoms, the effects of trauma, developmental and intellectual disabilities, and the impacts of social, cultural, historical, political, religious, racial, environmental, and ethnic influences on behavior;
- Ability to prioritize multiple client cases, deadlines, and demands;
- Ability to work flexible hours, including evenings, nights, and early mornings, and to travel throughout the state to attend hearings, meet with incarcerated clients, interview witnesses, and obtain mitigation material;
- Possess a valid driver's license;
- Ability to organize, interpret, and synthesize large quantities of information into persuasive, compelling, and thorough written narratives;
- Flexible and creative thinking;
- The ability to work as part of the defense team under the lead of the case attorney, and maintain confidentiality;
- Proficiency with Microsoft Word and Outlook, Adobe Acrobat, Excel, and general office equipment; and
- Self-motivated, with the ability to handle constructive feedback.

About Us

SADO is an independently governed state legal agency with offices in midtown Detroit and Lansing. Our eighty staff members form a community advocating for the people we represent and a fairer criminal legal system. Visit www.sado.org to learn more.

Benefits

- 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 resume and a cover letter via email by July 14, 2024, to hr@sado.org and include “Job ID 07-2024” in the subject line. **Applications without a resume and cover letter will not be considered.**

The cover letter should address the reasons underlying your interest in the work of the Juvenile Lifer Unit and explain your commitment to working with incarcerated people and people convicted of crimes.

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 for assistance.

www.SADO.org | @SADOmich | @SADOreentry