



Job Posting

Deadline: October 11, 2026

State Appellate Defender Office
3031 W. Grand Blvd., Ste. 450, Detroit, MI 48202
www.sado.org
@sadamich | @sadoreentry

MAACS Mitigation Specialist

Detroit or Lansing (Hybrid)
Full-Time, Limited Term Position

Join Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) as a full-time, limited-term Mitigation Specialist for the Private Counsel Division of SADO. The salary range for this position is \$57,252 to \$96,048, depending on experience.

Job Summary

The Private Counsel Division of the State Appellate Defender Office seeks motivated and qualified applicants to work with incarcerated clients who are eligible for resentencing hearings on direct appeal and juvenile lifers eligible for resentencing under the Michigan Supreme Court's recent [landmark ruling in People v Czarnecki and People v Taylor](#). SADO is hiring limited-term mitigation staff to provide support to the private counsel roster attorneys who represent these individuals.

This is a full-time, limited-term position with funding allocated through September 30, 2027. Continuation of this position beyond that date is contingent on future budget allocations.

Roster attorneys are assigned to represent and advocate for people who are appealing their convictions on direct appeal, and those who are serving unconstitutionally cruel and/or unusual life sentences for crimes committed as youth. Their clients are adults--some are still adjusting to life in prison as young adults, while others have lived several decades behind bars. Mitigation Specialists are a crucial part of the defense team and work with attorneys and clients to develop mitigating information for new sentencing hearings. Mitigation specialists perform a variety of functions with the end goal of helping to obtain release for their clients.

Mitigation specialists are supervised and trained by the Michigan Appellate Assigned Counsel System (MAACS) Administrator or the MAACS Roster Support and Performance Manager. This position can be based out of SADO's Detroit or Lansing office. The position requires extensive travel (about 20% of the time) and offers a flexible hybrid work policy.

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;
- 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

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.

Education:

- Education and/or equivalent experience in social work, social sciences, psychology, forensic psychology, journalism, anthropology, criminal justice, or a related field;

Commitments:

- Commitment to client-centered, zealous advocacy;
- Commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of clients;
- Commitment to cultural humility and cultural competency;

Knowledge and Abilities:

- 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;
- Self-motivated, with the ability to handle constructive feedback; and
- Candidates must be a current resident of or relocate to Michigan by hire date.

About Us

SADO is an independently governed state legal agency with offices in Detroit and Lansing. Our 100-plus 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 (partial vesting begins in 2 years)
- 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)
- Casual dress as appropriate
- Paid training opportunities
- Annual pay increases up to the maximum of the pay range with satisfactory performance

SADO employees are members of the UAW Local 412.

To Apply

Submit a resume and a cover letter via email by October 11, 2026, to jobs@sado.org and include "MAACS Mitigation Specialist 2026-13" 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 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. 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.

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