

Investigator

Detroit or Lansing (Hybrid)

Job Summary

Join Michigan's State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) as an Investigator working statewide to represent people as they appeal their felony convictions. 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. The position pays from \$57,252 to \$96,048, 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 our Lansing or Detroit office.

Michigan is one of the only states in the country that allows appellate attorneys to develop new evidence and hold evidentiary hearings in trial courts as part of a direct appeal. Working directly in the trial courts to expand the record on appeal can contribute to grants of [new trials](#) and significant reductions in a person's prison [sentence](#). Our investigators play vital roles in developing new evidence and obtaining [new trials](#) for clients.

Job Responsibilities

Investigation can be the heart of a successful appeal. We are seeking a tenacious and creative person who is skilled at interviewing, researching, and communicating. Knowledge of the criminal legal system, however obtained, is required. A commitment to social justice is essential.

The Investigator will lead efforts to obtain and analyze the evidence needed to zealously defend our clients in their appeal process through client and witness interviews, record review and analysis, and many other avenues. Assignments range from single-task requests to ongoing multi-faceted projects, but always move toward holding police, prosecutors, and the system accountable.

SADO investigators advance a client's appeal by engaging in the following duties, and more:

- Analyze the facts of a case and discuss strategies of defense with attorneys and defense team members
- Evaluate available evidence and develop evidentiary leads
- Gather and review records from a range of state and federal agencies
- Locate and interview witnesses, complainants, co-defendants, and suspects
- Travel to, view, and analyze crime scenes
- Enter prisons and jails to visit clients and witnesses
- Locate, contact, and evaluate available experts and arrange consultations
- Prepare experts, lay witnesses and clients for evidentiary hearings
- Create comprehensive reports of interviews, research, and other results
- Arrange for and serve subpoenas as necessary

- Assist attorneys at hearings with witness preparation or by preparing questions
- Testify in court

About Us

SADO team members include attorneys, investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, reentry specialists, programmers, IT, clerks, and administrative staff. We are growing and have over one hundred staff members who form a community advocating for the people we represent. Attorneys and investigators and other defense team members work in trial courts and appellate courts across the state to achieve tangible results 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. To learn more, visit our website and follow us on social media.

Qualifications

- Excellent interpersonal communication skills and mindfulness of what is needed to work across cultural differences of all kinds
- A commitment to indigent defense, public service, and racial equity
- The ability to accurately and completely preserve the investigation with written memos and reports
- Good internet research and analysis skills
- Knowledge of the criminal legal system
- An ability to work flexible hours (some evenings, early mornings, and weekends)
- The ability and means to travel occasionally throughout the state; a valid driver's license (the office reimburses for mileage and/or provides car rental for longer trips)
- The ability to visit and interview clients housed in correctional institutions
- Resilience in the face of difficult work and the ability to navigate difficult situations
- Prior investigation or related experience
- Specialized knowledge in forensic science, open source intelligence, digital forensics, and/or multiple languages or cultures is a plus
- Candidates must be a current resident of or relocate to Michigan by hire date

Benefits

State employee benefits are comprehensive and include:

- Medical, dental, vision, and life insurance
- 401k plan with up to a 9% employer contribution (partial vesting begins at 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

Those wishing to apply for the Investigator position should submit a cover letter and resume. Please include in your cover letter a discussion of your commitment to social justice. Successful applications will convey the applicant's fit with the position as described and explain how your experiences make the position of Investigator a good fit for you.

Applications should be emailed by October 23, 2026, to jobs@sado.org and include "Investigator 2026-11" in the subject line.

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.

www.SADO.org | @SADOmich | @SADOreentry