

Immigration Specialist Defender

Salary Range: \$57, 000 - \$70,000

Kalamazoo Defender is a non-profit organization established to represent indigent defendants charged with a crime within Kalamazoo County. It is our county's public defender.

Kalamazoo Defender differs from most public defender offices in the following ways: 1) It is a tax-exempt non-profit organization, independent from County government; 2) It is governed by a board of citizens with legal, judicial, medical, and social work experience; and 3) It incorporates a "holistic" model of client representation, integrated with Kalamazoo's many human services organizations in order to attend to the whole client, beyond any particular criminal charge.

Kalamazoo Defender's mission is rooted in the conviction that poverty and various forms of discrimination put our clients on inequitable footing within and beyond our criminal justice system. Our job is to be their zealous defender in the face of these systemic barriers, upholding not just the letter but the spirit of the U.S. Constitution's Sixth Amendment.

Core Responsibilities

- Advises fellow Public Defenders in both written memorandum form and orally on the immigration consequences of their clients' cases.
- Assists fellow Public Defenders with crafting legal arguments and strategies to avoid triggering immigration consequences and advocating on behalf of clients
- Identifying alternative dispositions that minimize the immigration consequences for the client.
- Providing immigration law support to attorneys at arraignment and subsequent stages of representation where the client's immigration status could be adversely affected by an attorney's decision.
- Carries a caseload and receives direct supervision from the Chief Public Defender.
- Takes cases involving misdemeanor charges, particularly those with an immigration element.
- Reviews charging instruments, police reports, and other discovery provided by the Prosecution.
- Promptly meets with clients and learns the client's goals for the representation and any special needs of the client.
- Determines what further investigation to undertake and directs that investigation, including the identification consultation, and hiring of applicable experts as approved by the Chief Public Defender or designee.
- Determines what legal issues need development, researches those issues, and presents them in the appropriate forum.
- Negotiates with the Prosecution and promptly advises the client of the status of those negotiations.

- Litigates any legal issues that are necessary and appropriate, including bringing cases to trial.
- Conducts any post-trial litigation necessary such as sentencing and post-trial motions (excluding appeals).
- Maintains availability to other staff members for consultation and education; participates in training programs; maintains current knowledge of appropriate support functions.
- Maintains accurate, complete, and legible case files.
- Completes special projects and other duties as assigned by the Chief Public Defender or designee.
- Participates in legal clinics held in community forums.

Expertise and Experience

- A Juris Doctorate with license to practice in the State of Michigan—and good standing with the State Bar of Michigan.
- Significant immigration law experience required.
- Court experience, particularly with criminal proceedings, a plus.
- Administrative and supervisory experience welcome.
- Exemplary interpersonal skills.
- Familiarity with the communities from which our clients come
- Compelling references and a solid legal track record.

Benefits

- Competitive salary, quality health care coverage, and generous retirement contributions.
- An opportunity to work within a dynamic, innovative legal program, backed by a County capable of maximizing Kalamazoo Defender's mission.
- As part of the Kalamazoo community, public school attendees are entitled to participation in the Kalamazoo Promise.

How to Apply:

Please send your resume, a cover letter, and your references to Jobs@KalamazooDefender.org or the following address:

Kalamazoo Defender
151 S. Rose Street, Suite 300
Kalamazoo, MI 49007