

# Social Worker

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## Job Description

**Starting Salary \$42,000 - \$50,000 D.O.E.**

The Northeast Michigan Regional Defender Office is a non-profit organization providing indigent criminal defense services in Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda Counties. The office envisions a holistic model of representation, integrated with local human service organizations to attend to the whole client, beyond the strict confines of a particular criminal charge.

### General Summary:

Under the direct supervision of the Lead Social Worker, the Social Worker plays an integral role in providing holistic defense services throughout the duration of the attorney/client relationship. As part of the defense team, the Social Worker will focus on addressing clients' risks and needs, collaborating with defense attorneys, building relationships within the community, and assisting with sentence mitigation. This position covers Oscoda and Montmorency Counties; and may assist in Alpena County from time to time, as needed.

## ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Reviews indigency applications and evaluates assigned clients to determine potential mental health, substance use disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities and/or other social issues, making referrals to appropriate agencies.
- Conducts interviews with client's family, friends, employers, and other support system members, documenting their history.
- Assists in obtaining and reviewing relevant records, evaluations, or reports; Where appropriate, assist the defense team in documenting and organizing digital and physical files of information collected.
- Gathers and presents information, prepares reports, and/or provides expert testimony in court at the direction of defense attorneys.
- Provides case management and referral services to clients and their families.
- Encompasses effective communication with the ability to relate empathetically, building trust with clients who have diverse backgrounds and special needs.
- Develops and maintains working relationships with area resource agencies, possibly requiring community outreach. Facilitates communication between the client, our staff, treatment providers, courts, probation, Community Corrections, the jails, and other community contacts.
- Prepares clients and their families for court, accompanying them as requested.

- Maintains timely documentation of case plans, reports, and case notes.
- Exercises common sense and good judgment, working compassionately and respectfully with clients.
- Maintains credibility, discreteness, and integrity while working with highly confidential and privileged information.
- Conveys a positive, friendly persona with excellent interpersonal skills and willingness to work as part of a team.
- Learns quickly, and functions efficiently under stressful and distracting conditions.
- Administers psychosocial assessments as requested by defense attorneys.
- Assist attorneys with defense strategies and sentence mitigation.
- Keeps current statewide resources available and relevant to client needs such as, treatment programs and alternative placements. Conduct research necessary to ensure resources are current.
- Accurately enters data into one or more databases, documents, or spreadsheets.
- Ensure quality service for each client individually, while maintaining an ever-changing caseload.
- Performs other duties as necessary.

*This list may not be inclusive of the total scope of job functions to be performed. Duties and responsibilities may be added, deleted, or modified at any time.*

## **EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Minimum of Bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, or related field of study.
- Two years of experience working with individuals involved in legal proceedings and/or mental health or substance use disorder treatment.
- Strong interest in serving the indigent criminally accused.
- General understanding of the criminal legal system.
- Ability to maintain accurate and detailed records.
- Ability to operate computer systems, software applications, and office equipment.
- Superior writing and presentation skills; ability to produce clear, concise, and effective materials in multiple formats and for multiple audiences.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and willingness to work as part of a team.
- Ability to be creative and approach work with enthusiasm.
- Valid driver's license and reliable vehicle.

## Preferred Qualifications:

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- Experience with those struggling or involved with addiction, mental illness, domestic violence, juvenile family court, homelessness, or other social issues.
- Work experience within the criminal justice system.
- Strong community ties and established relationships with local service providers, especially in Oscoda and Montmorency Counties.

## Additional Qualifications:

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The qualifications listed above are intended to represent the minimum skills and experience levels associated with performing the duties and responsibilities contained in this job description. The qualifications should not be viewed as expressing absolute employment or promotional standards, but as general guidelines that should be considered along with other job-related selection or promotional criteria.

### Physical Requirements:

This job requires the ability to perform the essential functions contained in this description. Reasonable accommodations will be made for otherwise qualified applicants unable to fulfill one or more of these requirements.

### Working Conditions:

- Exposure to those charged with and/ or convicted of serious criminal offenses.
- Works in office/courtroom setting; and will also meet with clients in jail. May sit or stand for long periods. May be required to testify in open court.
- Includes some travel between the covered counties and may include meeting with individuals at their homes, places of employment, etc.
- May assist with transportation, coordinating client appointments and/or filling out various forms or applications.
- May be required to lift up to 20 lbs.

### Benefits:

Competitive salary, attractive benefits package; supportive team environment and positive workplace culture; opportunity to effect visible and measurable positive change within the community.

### How to Apply:

Please send cover letter, resume, and college transcripts to Rick Steiger, Chief Defender at [rsteiger@nemichdefender.org](mailto:rsteiger@nemichdefender.org).

*The Northeast Michigan Regional Defender Office is an equal opportunity employer.*