



**Job Posting**

**Deadline: April 12, 2024**

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

[www.sado.org](http://www.sado.org)

@sadamich

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**Assistant Appellate Defender**  
**Hybrid (Remote/Office)**

**Job Summary:** Join Michigan’s State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) as an Assistant Appellate Defender 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 \$64,728 to \$131,397, depending on experience. Our office follows a hybrid workplace model that mixes in-office and remote work to offer flexibility and support to staff.

Assistant Appellate Defenders represent people on their direct appeals or for other post-conviction proceedings. Appeals involve challenges to convictions and sentences following trials and guilty pleas. Attorneys at SADO do many different things as part of an appeal, including:

- Travel to Michigan’s prisons and jails to consult with the people we represent
- Research legal issues and compose appellate and trial court briefs
- Oral argument in the trial and appellate courts, including the Michigan Supreme Court
- Interview witnesses, investigate and develop new evidence, and conduct evidentiary hearings in the trial courts, including direct and cross examination of witnesses
- Mitigate for resentencing hearings in the trial courts
- Negotiate with county prosecutors
- Communicate with our clients’ family, friends, and loved ones
- Collaborate with staff investigator and mitigation specialist to develop claims on appeal

**About Us:** SADO attorneys work in trial courts and appellate courts across the state to achieve tangible results for the people we represent 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.

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 contributes to frequent grants of [new trials](#) and significant reductions in a person’s prison [sentence](#).

Attorneys and the people they represent work with a team, including investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, reentry specialists, and administrative staff. Attorneys travel the state to meet with people in prisons and jails and to advocate in court, from Marquette to Macomb and from St. Joseph to Sault Ste. Marie. We gather on a weekly basis—sometimes remotely, sometimes in person—as attorneys and team members to brainstorm about issues and cases.

SADO attorneys frequently appear in the Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court and play an important role in shaping criminal law in Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

We have several internal committees and projects aimed at being an active member of the community, including Michigan Department of Corrections Quality of Life,<sup>2</sup> Court Rules and Legislation, and the Racial Justice Initiative. We inform the State Legislature on proposed legislation and the Michigan Supreme Court on [proposed rule changes](#). Our seventy-plus staff members form a community advocating for the people we represent and a fairer criminal legal system. Visit [www.sado.org](http://www.sado.org) to learn more.

**Qualifications:** Applicants must be current members of the Michigan Bar or eligible to waive into the bar. Applicants must have a commitment to indigent defense, public service, and racial equity. Skills in legal research and writing, client communication, and oral advocacy are required. A demonstrated ability to mentor and train new attorneys is preferred. The location for this position is a hybrid environment between remote and in-office at either our Lansing or Detroit office.

**Benefits:** State employee benefits are comprehensive and include:

- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> See SADO arguments before the Michigan Supreme Court in [People v Parks](#) and [People v Poole](#). As a result of SADO advocacy, the Court came to "the inescapable conclusion that mandatorily condemning 18-year-olds to die in prison, without consideration of the attributes of youth that 18-year-olds and juveniles share, no longer comports with the 'evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturity society.'" Read the opinion in *People v Parks* [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Read [recommendations](#) submitted by SADO in January, 2021, about how the Michigan Department of Corrections could address the COVID-19 crisis inside prisons.

**To Apply:** Submit a cover letter stating your interest in the position. Include your resume and a redacted writing sample.

Writing Sample Special Instructions: As part of its commitment to diversity in the workplace and its goal to prevent hiring bias, we ask that applicants submit redacted writing samples, which will be reviewed without access to applicant information and scored based on objective criteria. Your name, address, work affiliation, and other identifiers should be redacted from your writing sample. Files should be named generically, and your name should not be a part of the filename. For example, you can name the file WS1.pdf or WritingSample.pdf.

Applications should be emailed by April 12, 2024 to [hr@sado.org](mailto:hr@sado.org) and include "Job ID 01-2024" in the subject line.

**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 are unable to send applicant materials electronically, please contact Human Resources at 313-420-2905 for assistance.

[www.SADO.org](http://www.SADO.org) | @SADOmich