

Northeast Michigan Regional Defender Office

FULL-TIME STAFF INVESTIGATOR

Starting Salary: Up to \$75,000 per year, depending on experience

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.

Summary – The investigator is an integral team member, performing investigations and related activities to support the representation of our clients. Work includes locating and interviewing witnesses, finding and validating evidence, searching records and databases, assisting with organization of evidence and trial preparation. Must demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to a team-centered approach to the zealous and dignified representation of indigent defendants.

Primary Duties & Responsibilities:

- Screen incoming case files to aid in identifying any potential investigation needs
- Coordinate with attorneys to develop case-specific investigation plans
- Develop leads and sources of information including community and informant contacts
- Locate and interview witnesses, complainants, and clients
- Draft, file and track FOIA requests as required to develop evidence
- Search public records and various online resources as necessary
- Conduct background checks and verify information for accuracy
- Visit crime scenes and take photos and/or videos and draw diagrams as appropriate
- Prepare professional trial exhibits to facilitate improved understanding of a case
- Conduct surveillance of both stationary and mobile subjects as directed by attorneys
- Assist with organizing and maintaining evidence in the electronic case files
- Serve subpoenas
- Coordinate witnesses for court appearances and assist with preparing and presenting evidence
- Testify in court as needed
- Prepare professional correspondence and other written materials
- Compile and present clear and concise reports (as requested)
- Document all case-related activities in the electronic case file in a timely manner
- Participate in case meetings and maintain frequent contact with attorneys regarding case activity
- Maintain availability to other staff members for consultation and education
- Participate in training programs
- Develop/maintain knowledge of applicable technology including but not limited to electronic case management system, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation software, email, internet, social media, AI applications and other tools
- Complete special projects and other duties as assigned by the Chief Defender or Deputy Chief Defender

Minimum Education and Experience:

- Associate or bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in criminal justice, legal studies, social sciences or other relevant field with at least two (2) years of experience in criminal justice investigations. Relevant work experience may substitute for degree requirement.
- Must be licensed as a professional investigator in Michigan or be eligible and willing to obtain licensure before commencing employment

Additional Requirements:

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills with an ability to quickly build relationships across varying identities, income levels, races and ethnicities
- Demonstrated commitment to indigent defense, racial equity, and social justice issues
- Knowledge of techniques, principles, methods, laws and regulations related to private investigations as well as general concepts of criminal law and arrest procedures
- Self-motivated with strong analytical and problem-solving skills
- Willingness to accept direction and follow office policies and procedures
- Ability to work within a team approach to all aspects of indigent defense
- Ability to simultaneously handle multiple projects and function effectively under stressful and distracting conditions
- Must have valid driver's license and reliable, insured vehicle
- Frequent travel within coverage area, and occasional travel outside of coverage area

Physical Requirements & Working Conditions:

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

- May be required to lift up to 20 lbs.
- Must have physical ability to talk, hear, and communicate verbally with others
- Frequently required to sit for extended periods of time
- Works in office/courtroom setting along with regularly occurring field work
- Meets with individuals in jails/prisons and in various locations within the community
- Majority of hours worked are between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; with some weekends, evenings, holidays as necessary to contact witnesses
- Some remote work permitted

This description is intended to describe the type and level of work to be performed by a person assigned to this job. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all job duties.

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