

## Immigration Social Worker

### Overview

The Bronx Defenders (BxD) - an innovative, progressive, holistic indigent defense office in the South Bronx - seeks a social worker with a commitment to public defense and immigrants' rights to work with our New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) detained removal defense program.

Founded in 1997, The Bronx Defenders is a public defender nonprofit that has developed a nationally recognized model of representation called holistic defense, which provides people with teams of lawyers, social workers, and advocates to defend them zealously in court as well as to address the underlying drivers and enmeshed penalties of legal system involvement.

Since opening our doors, we have grown into an organization of more than 400 staff members defending nearly 20,000 New Yorkers each year in criminal, family, civil, and immigration proceedings who face incarceration, family separation, eviction, and deportation, among other devastating consequences.

Today we are reimagining the role of public defense even further, using community organizing and engagement, legislative advocacy, and impact litigation to partner with the communities we represent to bring about long-lasting systemic change.

We also share our model and lessons learned with current and future public defenders. We run two legal clinics at NYC law schools and train public defenders from one end of the country to the next on how to move to a holistic model of representation.

### Immigration

Nearly a third of the residents of the Bronx were born outside the United States, and many face the unprecedented threat of detention and deportation by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Our attorneys help people facing criminal, family, and civil proceedings make informed and strategic decisions to protect their rights. We are also one of the three public defender organizations leading the nation's first-ever universal representation program for detained immigrants facing deportation.

### SOCIAL WORK

Effectively fighting for people facing legal charges requires knowing and understanding their goals and needs beyond those related to a single case or legal matter. Our Social Work Practice provides an understanding of people's lives and the challenges that are connected to their involvement in the various legal systems. The expertise of our Masters-level social workers and non-legal advocates helps people secure positive case outcomes and address the issues that drove them into the legal system in the first place.

### Responsibilities

Strategizing with lawyers and other advocates, social workers at The Bronx Defenders assist people with issues that precipitate and are exacerbated by contact with legal systems. Social workers are responsible for assisting with advocacy on behalf of the people we represent, including preparing written advocacy work, coordinating with treatment programs and social service providers, and supporting the people we represent as they navigate their cases.

- Work collaboratively with clients, lawyers and other advocates on multidisciplinary

holistic defense teams to achieve clients' stated legal goals

- Interview and assess clients to identify strengths, resources and needs
- Conduct supportive counseling, crisis intervention and case management services for Immigration Practice clients throughout the pendency of their legal cases
- Create and compile written psycho-social assessments, release plans and/or collections of social science research for submission to the immigration courts or USCIS
- Assist with review of behavioral health and other records, and liaise with external behavioral health experts to conduct evaluations of Immigration Practice clients
- Visit clients in detention in ICE facilities in New Jersey and New York State and attend court hearings in both the detained and non-detained immigration courts in lower Manhattan
- Advocate for Immigration Practice clients across immigration, criminal and family court settings
- Provide re-entry services to clients upon release from detention to their communities in the US and/or upon return to their countries of origin when possible
- Maintain records of client work in Bronx Defenders' organizational case management system
- Cultivate relationships with community programs and social service providers

## Qualifications

We are specifically seeking applications from candidates with Spanish language skills and/or those from racially and/or ethnically marginalized communities disproportionately impacted by systemic injustice and whose lived experiences contribute to more culturally conscious client representation.

To be eligible, applicants must have:

- M.S.W. from an accredited School of Social Work; candidates with LMSW or LCSW licensure are encouraged to apply

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Experience working in and with racially and ethnically marginalized communities targeted by carceral systems
- Interest in and ability to work with immigrant communities that have experienced significant trauma and systemic injustice
- Commitment to defending non-citizens from deportation
- Commitment to fierce advocacy and willingness to strategically challenge authority in defense of people ensnared in the immigration legal system
- Ability to work well both independently and collaboratively with lawyers, non-lawyers and external service providers
- Ability to effectively and respectfully communicate, collaborate and connect with people from various backgrounds, identities and experiences
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Effective research, writing, and oral advocacy skills
- Ability to multitask, maintain order and meet deadlines in a fast-paced, high-stakes environment
- Ability to think critically and creatively in a fast-paced setting, finding innovative solutions to unique obstacles
- Ability to receive feedback constructively, reflect, and shift behavior accordingly
- Meticulous attention to detail
- Ability to exercise good judgment, discretion, and confidentiality around sensitive issues
- Knowledge of substance use, domestic violence, mental health systems

- Experience conducting psychosocial assessments and offering supportive counseling preferred
- Commitment to raising one's cultural consciousness and challenging oppressive practices
- on an interpersonal and institutional level

Approximately 70% of The Bronx Defenders' staff, including attorneys and non-attorneys, are represented by UAW Local 2325 - Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (AFL-CIO). This position is within the bargaining unit.

This position is exempt. By law, nonexempt employees are compensated hourly based on their annual rate and therefore are entitled to overtime, whereas exempt employees are not.

Salary is commensurate with experience. For candidates with 1-10 years of directly relevant experience, the salary range for this position would be approximately \$87,177 to \$114,577. Full-time employees are also eligible for a comprehensive benefits package including but not limited to medical, dental and vision coverage; a 403(b) plan with employer contribution; a generous vacation, sick leave, and parental leave policy; and a professional development fund. More specific information about salary and benefits will be provided when and if an offer is extended.

To apply, upload your resume and cover letter in one document and submit online.

The application deadline is [date]. Contact [hire@bronxdefenders.org](mailto:hire@bronxdefenders.org) with any questions.

***The Bronx Defenders is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to maintaining a workplace that embraces staff with a diversity of backgrounds, identities, and experiences. We acknowledge the ways in which systemic oppression and injustice can undermine access to professional opportunities and are committed to conducting hiring and promotion processes that are equitable and accessible to those commonly excluded from the workforce. We do not discriminate against and in fact specifically encourage applicants from marginalized communities to apply, including those who identify as Black, Indigenous, people of color, queer, transgender, gender non-conforming, disabled, neurodivergent, and those directly impacted by criminal, civil, family, and immigration legal systems. We value lived as well as professional experience and particularly welcome applications from the Bronx community that we serve.***

