



Family Engagement Specialist – Family Defense Project

Youth, Rights & Justice, an innovative juvenile law nonprofit based in Portland OR is seeking a Family Engagement Specialist to join our team. YRJ's mission is to advance the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community.

Founded in 1975, YRJ is widely recognized as a leader in juvenile law. We provide court-appointed representation of children, youth, and parents involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems—in both the trial and appellate courts. We also represent individual children and youth in school-related enrollment, special education, and disciplinary matters.

YRJ's vision is a just and equitable society that creates opportunities for children, parents, and families to achieve their goals and aspirations. YRJ is committed to addressing systemic injustices and the needs of our service population through innovative programs, policy work, and impact litigation.

Youth, Rights & Justice offers a competitive benefits package, including 15 days of vacation annually (increases to 20 days after two years); eight hours paid self-care time each month; paid sick and holiday time; 8-week paid sabbatical after 10 years; wellness and cell phone stipends; medical, dental and vision plans; matching 401K retirement benefits; and more.

We encourage diverse applicants and are aware of research indicating that many women and BIPOC individuals hesitate to apply if they don't fully match all listed qualifications. We encourage you to consider this opportunity holistically and we commit to evaluating candidates for this opportunity holistically.

Status Classification: Regular full-time; exempt (salaried)

Hours: Regular hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 5:00pm, some evenings and weekends as needed to carry out the responsibilities of the position

Reports to: Supervising Attorney

Salary: \$50,100 - \$73,146

Summary:

Youth, Rights & Justice's Family Defense Project seeks an energetic and compassionate individual as a Family Engagement Specialist. The Family Defense Project combines legal advocacy with social work services to assist families in keeping children safely at home. The program minimizes the emotional trauma caused by removal and allows the foster care system to focus its resources on children who truly need its protection.

The Family Engagement Specialist's primary responsibility will be to work collaboratively with attorneys representing parents before or during an investigation by the Department of Human Services, as part of YRJ's holistic advocacy teams. The Family Engagement Specialist will provide direct social work support and advocacy to clients, conduct intake and client interviews, assess clients' needs and goals, and ensure clients are supported while engaging in meaningful services.

The Family Engagement Specialist will also work to build and enhance YRJ's relationships with community service providers and service organizations. The Family Engagement Specialist will collect program outcome data, including client surveys.

Applicants must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, a commitment to interdisciplinary representation of parents and a desire to share in both the excitement and challenges of a growing endeavor. Salary is commensurate with experience.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Interviewing YRJ clients and performing strength-based assessments to determine clients' legal and social needs.
2. Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients.
3. Attending community meetings with clients.
4. Acting as a liaison between various service providers to help clients access and coordinate services.
5. Understanding of the landscape of relevant programs and service providers – including community-based and culturally competent providers of mental health care services, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence counseling, and housing resources.
6. Making referrals and assisting with logistics and enrollment to help clients access needed services and benefits.
7. Gathering and analyzing information through records collection and collateral interviews including interviews of parents, guardians, and other relevant family members.
8. Creating and maintaining accurate and complete client files in YRJ's case management system in a timely manner.
9. Developing programmatic forms.
10. Collecting and analyzing data about program outcomes and preparing reports.
11. Drafting reports for funders and other stakeholders.
12. Working as a collaborative member of a legal team.
13. Other duties as assigned.

The Family Engagement Specialist must perform all duties in accordance with applicable law, ethical rules, and the performance standards promulgated by the Oregon State Bar.

The Family Engagement Specialist will be provided with ongoing training in areas of importance to their job, including applicable professional, ethical, and legal rules.

Required skills and Abilities:

- Passion for YRJ's vision, mission, values, and work
- Alignment with YRJ's values of collaboration, equity, openness, compassion, integrity, and agility
- Commitment to amplifying the voices of our clients and their communities
- Excellent interpersonal and motivational interviewing skills, and the ability to develop rapport with a wide range of people
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Thorough understanding of social, psychological, medical, economic, and legal factors that affect clients and lead to engagement with Oregon DHS or the juvenile delinquency systems
- Creativity, proactivity, and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges
- Ability to multitask and be a proactive and collaborative team player
- Ability to work compassionately and respectfully with clients in crisis
- Trained to use a trauma-informed approach to client communication and assessments
- Proficient in computer applications, including the MS Office suite

Desired Skill:

- Bilingual in Spanish and English

Preferred Education/Experience:

- Bachelor's or higher level degree in Social Work/Human Services or a closely related field; OR a Bachelor's degree in a field not closely related (to Social Work/Human Services) and one year of human services related experience (i.e., work providing assistance to individuals and groups with issues such as economically disadvantaged, employment, abuse and neglect, substance abuse, aging, disabilities, prevention, health, cultural competencies, inadequate housing); OR equivalent education and experience.
- Prior experience working in or with the Oregon child welfare system and/or experience with public benefits, education, housing or immigration issues.
- Preference for applicants with lived experience in the child welfare or juvenile justice system.
- Preference for applicants with lived experience as members of a historically underserved population.

Certifications/Licenses:

- Valid Driver's License, Automobile insurance coverage as required by state law, and a vehicle.

To apply, please email a resume and one-page cover letter to Ally Hood:

ally.h@youthrightsjustice.org

Applications will be accepted until July 31. Interviews will be hosted during the first week of August.