

## **Texas Defender Service (TDS) – Junior Mitigation Specialist**

### **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

The newly created Mitigation and Investigation Unit at Texas Defender Service (TDS) invites applications for a Mitigation Specialist to work in the project's Austin, Texas office. The Specialist will work under the supervision of the Director of Mitigation and Investigation.

#### **About TDS:**

TDS is a 22-year-old private, non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the Texas criminal justice system by reducing unfair use of the death penalty and by implementing an effective indigent defense system.

#### **Role:**

The Mitigation Specialist is responsible for investigating, analyzing, and developing evidence relevant to the client's life history for both trials and post-conviction proceedings in capital cases. The Mitigation Specialist will be appointed on death eligible cases throughout the state and work in collaboration with the Capital Trial Project, Post-Conviction Team, and external capital defense lawyers.

#### **Duties:**

- Obtaining and analyzing anecdotal and documentary evidence relevant to the client's life history, including but not limited to: medical and psychiatric history; trauma history; educational history; employment history; military history; social service and child protective service contacts with the family; multi-generational family history and patterns of behavior; genetic disorders and vulnerabilities; prior adult and juvenile correctional experience; religious, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, racial, cultural and community influences; and socio- economic, historical and political factors.
- Interviewing the client, establishing on-going relationships with the client and family, and interviewing witnesses who are knowledgeable about the client at every phase of his or her life, relevant to both the crime and the client's life history in a culturally competent manner.
- Establishing rapport with clients and witnesses that overcomes barriers those individuals may have against the disclosure of sensitive information.
- Assisting in identifying and working with experts.
- Furnishing memos and/or reports on a variety of topics to counsel and experts, including social histories and chronologies.
- Working as a member and facilitating the success of teams.
- Consulting with attorneys to develop theories of the case and case strategy.
- Organizing and administering the case file.

#### **Qualifications:**

- MSW or comparable degree in a related field and 1 year experience as a mitigation specialist; or equivalent years of experience as mitigation specialist in capital cases.
- Driver's license.
- Ability and willingness to travel.
- An organized and precise work practice with attention to detail and accuracy.
- Highly developed ability to absorb and order information.

- Clear written and oral expression.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills.
- Commitment to excellence in indigent defender services.
- Strengths in team work, client relations and relationship building.
- Experience working with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and an awareness of the issues that must be overcome to successfully work with people who have life experiences you do not share.
- Creativity and energy in approaching all tasks and responsibilities.
- Ability to work in a client-centered practice, and maintain the confidentiality of all information obtained while working on the case.
- Experience with Internet research and strong computer skills with programs such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

**Non-essential but highly desirable**

- Computer literacy in additional software, such as, spreadsheets, databases, case management software.
- Proficiency in Spanish or another foreign language.

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, three references and a writing sample no later than April 15, 2018

Texas Defender Service  
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