

## BECOME AN ADVOCATE IN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

**Connect people with vital mental health or substance use treatment. Create a service plan to help someone get released from jail. Ensure people have access to a social safety net. This is just some of the vital work you will do as a PFJ Advocate.**

Partners for Justice (PFJ) was founded to transform public defense locally and across the United States to ensure that people can walk away from the criminal legal system with their rights, lives, and futures protected. Public defenders have a crucial opportunity to assist low-income people with the underlying circumstances that contribute to criminal legal system involvement. With their unique position of trust and opportunity for early contact with clients, public defenders can help people secure better outcomes inside and outside the courtroom.

PFJ works closely with public defenders to help them adopt more collaborative practices and equip them to provide wraparound support to low-income people facing criminal charges. Our flagship program embeds trained Client Advocates in a public defender's office, immediately expanding the office's capacity to assist clients. Advocates work directly to protect clients from the devastating impacts of arrest and connect them with resources to support their future.

***Partners for Justice is deeply committed to equity and inclusion in our Advocate selection process. We urge people who have been impacted by the criminal legal system or who share lived experiences with public defender clients to apply for any of our placements.***

### What you'll do

As an Advocate, you will get a close-up view of the criminal legal system, receive ongoing training and support from PFJ's national team, and be part of a national community of professionals doing similar work. PFJ Advocates will work directly with public defender clients to help keep them out of jail and connect with supportive community resources. Advocates also act as holistic champions within their office, modeling client-centered teamwork in public defense. Finally, Advocates should be active participants in the PFJ program to help create community with their peers across the country.

Advocates work directly with public defender clients to help keep them out of jail, connect them with supportive community resources, and prevent the non-criminal consequences of arrest. Advocates also act as holistic champions within their office, modeling client-centered teamwork in public defense. Finally, Advocates should be active participants in the PFJ program to help create community with their peers across the country.

- Build relationships with your clients to understand their challenges and priorities and identify potential collateral consequences of arrest
- Depending on client needs and attorney direction, assist clients with issues such as (but not limited to):
  - Obtaining mental health or substance use treatment
  - Assessing eligibility and enrolling in public benefits
  - Maintaining or obtaining employment licenses or driver's licenses
  - Obtaining representation in housing, employment or family matters
  - Preventing evictions and accessing emergency housing resources
- Develop partnerships with local government agencies and community organizations, and maintain deep knowledge of their services so that you can appropriately refer and advocate for clients
- Partner closely with attorneys to support arguments for better legal outcomes, including providing relevant information and records, and drafting persuasive narrative reports
- Ensure seamless coordination across interdisciplinary legal and social service teams
- Maintain detailed knowledge of court processes and requirements
- Advocate for clients with service providers, attorneys, judges, landlords, employers, and others (as appropriate); tell your clients' stories in a compelling way that gets results
- Collect and report data about your work and your achievements
- Participate in biweekly one-on-one coaching calls, monthly team meetings, and monthly professional development sessions with the PFJ national team

### Who you are

- **Committed** to working side-by-side with people who are marginalized, knowing that everyone in the criminal justice system is resilient and deserving of support
- A **creative problem-solver** who is able to find innovative and efficient solutions to unusual obstacles
- **Tenacious**: The kind of person who will chase down an issue to its conclusion, regardless of the challenges in your way
- A **proactive and independent self-starter** who is comfortable in ambiguous situations and requires limited direction
- **Emotionally durable**: You have developed strategies that allow you to witness traumatic situations and come back to fight again the next day

### What you'll need

- Collegiate-level writing skills
- Demonstrated interest in public service, criminal justice, civil rights, or social justice
- Demonstrated record of achievement and personal leadership
- Comfort working with minimal oversight and excitement about the ability to structure your own work
- Interest in working at one of PFJ's current placement offices (these are not currently remote positions):
  - The Los Angeles County, CA Public Defender's Office
  - The Alameda County, CA Public Defender's Office
  - The Douglas County, KS Public Defender's Office
- Natives or current residents of one of our program locations strongly encouraged to apply
- Availability to begin work in mid-March, 2022 and commitment to staying in your placement for two years; further employment beyond that date is at the discretion of the public defender's office

### What you'll gain from your time as an Advocate

- Satisfaction in having made a concrete difference in individual lives and the overall community
- Real-world exposure to how the legal system and other government institutions operate
- Absolute confidence in your ability to face down new challenges and navigate them successfully
- Skills in negotiation, mediation, persuasion and storytelling
- Access to training, mentors and coaches during your time with PFJ and prepare you for your next steps

Salaries range from \$40,000 to \$50,000 annually depending on your placement jurisdiction. Advocates also receive a benefits package that includes medical coverage and paid time off. Partners for Justice also provides supplemental benefits, including relocation assistance, funding for professional development, and an annual wellness stipend. More information on site-specific salary and benefits packages at our current placement offices will be provided during our interview process.

### How we'll know you're the right person for the role

The PFJ selection process has three stages: an application, a first-round interview, and a final interview.

To apply, please visit [www.partnersforjustice.org/apply](http://www.partnersforjustice.org/apply). You will be asked to submit an application that includes a resume, a recent transcript (an unofficial transcript is acceptable), and a writing sample. Applications will be accepted through January 30, 2022 and first-round interviews will begin in early February.

**For more information, visit our website at [www.partnersforjustice.org](http://www.partnersforjustice.org)**