

Youth, Rights & Justice

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Pre-Petition Program “Family Engagement Specialist” Job Description

Our Mission: *Youth, Rights & Justice advances the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community.*

Status Classification: Regular full-time; non-exempt (hourly)

Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, schedule flexibility needed to meet client needs. Depending upon case and client needs, the Family Engagement Specialist can expect to be called upon to work some nights and weekends.

Reports to: Supervising Attorney

Summary:

Youth, Rights & Justice’s new pre-petition program seeks a compassionate individual with strong self-initiative to fill a position for a Family Engagement Specialist. The pre-petition program is part of YRJ’s vision of a just and equitable society that creates opportunities for children, parents, and families to imagine and achieve their aspirations. The pre-petition program will provide legal advocacy and social work services to low-income parents to prevent the unnecessary placement and prolonged stay of children in foster care. By doing so, the pre-petition program will keep children safe with their families, minimize the emotional trauma caused by removal, and allow 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 wholistic 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 also collect program outcome data, including client surveys.

Applicants must have excellent interpersonal and communication skills, a commitment to interdisciplinary representation of parents and family members 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’ psychiatric/psychological, social, emotional, and educational needs.
2. Building and maintaining strong relationships of trust with clients.
3. Attending community meetings with clients.
4. Acting as a liaison between the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), home, school, and community providers to access, mobilize, and coordinate services.

5. Being familiar with 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 – and assessing the quality of service from providers and their suitability for YRJ clients.
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 client files in YRJ's case management system.
9. Developing programmatic forms.
10. Collecting and analyzing data about program outcomes.
11. 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:

- A commitment to YRJ's mission.
- A commitment to interdisciplinary representation of parents and family members and a desire to share in both the exhilaration and challenges of a growing endeavor.
- Support the diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of YRJ.
- 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.
- Strong work ethic.
- Creativity, proactivity, and flexibility in solving problems and meeting challenges.
- Ability to multitask and be a productive team player.
- Ability to work compassionately and respectfully with clients in crisis.
- Experience working with individuals from multi-ethnic communities.
- Trained to use a trauma-informed approach to client communication and assessments.
- Ability to work as both an advocate and as part of a team.
- Experience working in coalitions.
- Basic computer skills including Word, Excel, Power Point, MS Teams, and case management database.

Desired Skill:

Bilingual in Spanish and English

Qualifications:

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

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 is preferred as is experience with public benefits, education, housing or immigration issues.

Preference given to applicants who are Registered and/or Licensed as a social worker in Oregon by the Oregon State Board of Social Workers.

Preference for applicants with lived experience as a consumer of child welfare or juvenile justice services.

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.

Language Ability:

Ability to read in English, and interpret documents such as court reports, police reports and medical evaluations. Ability to write routine reports, legal documents, and correspondence. Ability to speak articulately before groups to advocate for clients.

Math Ability:

Ability to add and subtract two-digit numbers and to multiply and divide with 10's and 100's. Ability to perform these operations using units of American money and weight measurement, volume, and distance.

Reasoning Ability:

Ability to apply common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral, or diagram form. Ability to independently solve problems by considering a number of different factors and circumstances.

Work Environment:

YRJ currently has regular office space, and works in a hybrid work environment, based on a comprehensive telework policy. The work environment characteristics described are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

Physical Demands:

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 10 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision and ability to adjust focus. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear and occasionally use sense of smell. The employee is frequently required to sit and use hands and occasionally stand, walk and climb. The physical demands of the job vary on a daily basis and are determined by the location and accessibility of home visit sites. The employee may experience home visit locations with varying degrees of cleanliness.

Salary and Compensation:

Compensation is determined by market range for the Portland metro area and is commensurate with experience and includes a great benefits package with medical (including mental health coverage), employee assistance program, dental, vision, disability and life insurance, 401k retirement plan with employer match, generous vacation and sick leave, and monthly time-off for self-care.

Salary range for this position is: \$45,600 - \$64,296 annually / \$23 - \$33 per hour.

We maintain a salary differential for desirable skills and experience including relevant language fluency and personal experience with the juvenile legal and child welfare systems.

About Youth, Rights & Justice:

Youth, Rights & Justice advances the rights of children, parents, and families through advocacy in the courts, schools, legislature, and community. YRJ provides holistic legal services and policy advocacy for children, parents, and families in Multnomah County and statewide. We:

- Serve as public defenders in juvenile cases in both trial and appellate courts.
- Advocate for students to ensure they have equitable access to education.
- Provide leadership to reform the juvenile justice, dependency, and education systems statewide through programs, policy advocacy, consultation, training, and impact litigation.

YRJ was founded in 1975 as a program of Multnomah County Legal Aid Services and in 1985 we became an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit law firm. As a public defense firm, YRJ is court-appointed to represent children in foster care, parents whose children have been removed, and youth in the juvenile justice system. Since our founding, YRJ has represented over 25,000 children and parents involved in the juvenile court system, helping children find their forever homes, ensuring students succeeded in school, providing youth with a fair trial and a second chance, and allowing families to safely reunite.