

NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDER SERVICE OF HARLEM
Legal Advocate, Civil Defense Practice – Housing
Defense Team

The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS) is a community-based, client-centered, holistic public defense office located in Harlem, providing criminal, civil, and family representation. NDS Clients are represented by multidisciplinary teams including attorneys, advocates and social workers. NDS is accepting applications for a Legal Advocate for the Housing Defense Team within the Civil Defense Practice.

OVERVIEW

The Housing Defense Team plays an integral role in NDS's fulfillment of its holistic mission and in realizing the right to counsel in housing proceedings. The team is part of the monumental movement toward a civil *Gideon*, providing assigned counsel representation to low- and no-income tenants facing a wide range of eviction proceedings in order to safeguard the right to secure, stable housing and combat the destabilization and disintegration of New York's diverse communities. The Legal Advocate is responsible for supporting the Housing Defense Team's work and its clients.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work as part of an interdisciplinary team to provide excellent, client-centered representation and support individual tenants facing eviction and housing insecurity from intake through case resolution;
- Conduct client intake and screen for representation both in-Court and in NDS's Harlem office;*
- Provide advice and counsel, informal advocacy and other brief services to clients in housing-related matters;
- Advocate for clients to access and obtain benefits, subsidies and other services to resolve Housing Court proceedings;
- Demonstrate energy, enthusiasm and ingenuity in working on challenging cases as assigned by supervisors;
- Represent NDS at Coalition meetings and community-based initiatives on housing issues on an as-needed basis.

Desired Capabilities and Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree;
- At least one year of experience working with low-income tenants or with New York City benefits agencies preferred, though exceptional inexperienced candidates will also be considered;
- A demonstrated commitment to social justice issues and experience working with individuals of diverse backgrounds;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Excellent organizational skills, including the ability to manage a diverse caseload;
- Must be able to travel throughout New York City to the various courts, administrative agencies and to client appointments;*
- Must be able to work cooperatively with attorneys and other NDS advocates, and problem-solve independently;
- Fluency in Spanish is strongly preferred.

*Please note that NDS's office and the New York City Housing Court are currently operating remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon reopening, the Legal Advocate position will be an in-person position based in NDS's Harlem office.

COMPENSATION

Compensation is commensurate with experience and is in adherence to the NDS compensation scale. Full medical and dental benefits, as well as other benefits, are provided. The salary, benefits, and employment policies relevant to this position are governed by the CBA between NDS and the NDS Union, part of ALAA UAW 2325.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should email a cover letter and resume as one PDF with the subject line, "Legal Advocate, Housing Defense Practice" to: eponder@ndsny.org. For more information about NDS, please visit our website at www.ndsny.org.

The Neighborhood Defender Service is committed to creating a diverse environment that reflects the community we serve. NDS is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply and will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, age, or veteran status. NDS encourages people with incarcerated loved ones, formerly incarcerated people, people of color, women, queer, transgender, gender non-conforming, and gender fluid people to apply.