



Mental Health Project

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT DISABILITY ADVOCATE

The Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project (MHP) seeks a disability advocate to assist and represent clients with mental health concerns in their applications for federal disability benefits (SSI/SSDI).

Who Are We?

MHP is a team of attorneys, social workers, advocates, and peer specialists, dedicated to disrupting and dismantling the cycle of hospitalization, homelessness, and incarceration that traps New Yorkers living with serious mental health concerns and experiencing poverty. We intervene at all parts of this cycle: we work to secure financial and medical benefits to prevent homelessness and hospitalization; we provide peer advocacy and social work support to empower clients in the community; we collaborate on impact litigation; we ensure proper discharge planning occurs prior to release from jail and psychiatric hospitals; we connect people to the appropriate organizations through advice and referrals; and we host community workshops to educate people about their rights and how to advocate for themselves and their peers.

Job Summary and Qualifications

The advocate in this position will be responsible for helping clients who are experiencing homelessness apply for federal disability benefits using the SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) model. SOAR is an evidence-based model that helps individuals with mental health concerns who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness apply for SSI/SSDI benefits. This advocate will work as part of an interdisciplinary team that provides advocacy services for adults with mental health concerns experiencing poverty.

The Mental Health Project seeks a candidate with the following qualifications:

- Strong verbal advocacy and writing skills, with the ability to analyze extensive data and create written reports with accuracy and brevity;
- Strong time-management skills, attention to detail;
- Ability to manage numerous long-term cases with varying needs and deadlines;
- Experience and commitment to providing client-centered and trauma-informed advocacy;
- Strong anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and social justice analysis and lens;
- Ability to be collaborative and work with a team;
- SOAR experience preferred;
- MSW or BSW a plus;
- Proficiency in Spanish a plus.

Responsibilities:

- Represent clients in the application process for federal disability benefits;
- Interview clients to gather information to complete applications;
- Gather medical records and other evidence to support the clients' applications;
- Write SOAR Medical Summary Reports for individual applications;
- Accompany individuals to appointments at the Social Security Administration, and other appointments as needed;
- Work with referral sources and community partners to identify applicants through outreach and meetings;
- Maintain client files and databases;
- Collaborate with MHP team members to provide holistic advocacy services.

Benefits/Compensation:

Salary is DOE. The Urban Justice Center offers a flexible work environment and a highly competitive benefits package that includes vacation, personal, and sick time; medical and dental coverage; vision and gym reimbursements; and a 401(k) plan. The Urban Justice Center is currently working remotely.

This is a bargaining unit position represented for collective bargaining purposes by the National Organization of Legal Services Workers, UAW, Local 2320.

How to Apply:

To apply send a cover letter, resume, and a 3-5 page writing sample to mhpjobs@urbanjustice.org. Please write "Disability Advocate Position" in the e-mail subject line. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Due to high volume, we are unable to respond to all applicants. We will contact only those candidates selected for further consideration.

The Urban Justice Center is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will be afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, religion/creed, color, national origin, sex, SOGIE, age, disability, military status, predisposing genetic characteristics, victim of domestic violence status, or marital status. People with lived experience of mental health concerns and/or criminal legal system involvement are encouraged to apply.