

Criminal Justice Advocate
Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project

The Mental Health Project of the Urban Justice Center (MHP) seeks an advocate to advance the work of our criminal justice advocacy program. The Criminal Justice Advocate will support our litigation efforts to ensure that people receiving mental health treatment in New York City jails are provided with appropriate discharge planning services before they are released from custody. MHP is a team of attorneys, social workers, and advocates dedicated to enforcing the rights of low-income New Yorkers with mental health concerns.

MHP aims to break the cycle of hospitalization, homelessness, and incarceration for low-income New Yorkers with mental health concerns. Through the class action lawsuit, *Brad H. v. City of New York*, MHP challenged New York City's practice of discharging incarcerated people with mental health concerns from jail in the middle of the night with only a \$3 Metrocard and \$1.50 in cash and without any psychiatric medication or referral to services. This lawsuit established a right to discharge planning for people who receive mental health treatment while incarcerated in a City jail. In 2003 the lawsuit was settled, and the City agreed to provide class members with medication, aftercare, benefits, housing assistance, and transportation.

Responsibilities include:

- Visiting NYC jails twice a week to interview people receiving mental health treatment about their discharge planning needs and whether those needs are being met;
- Assisting in monitoring and enforcing compliance with the *Brad H.* settlement;
- Submitting written complaints to the City regarding class members' discharge planning needs;
- Following up with individuals released from jail to determine whether they received appropriate discharge planning services;
- Responding to calls and letters from people in jail and prison, their families, and others regarding discharge planning issues;
- Collecting and maintaining client data;
- Participating in legislative advocacy and community education as needed;
- Assisting MHP's Director of Criminal Justice Advocacy; and
- Performing administrative and clerical duties as appropriate.

Qualifications include:

- Experience working directly with people with mental health concerns;
- Knowledge of the criminal legal system and/or community mental health system;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Ability to work independently, stay organized, and meet deadlines;
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel;
- Fluency in Spanish;
- Advocacy skills and the ability to navigate bureaucratic agencies; and
- Demonstrated commitment to fighting for social justice.

Salary DOE. Excellent benefits. To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, references, and writing sample to mhp@urbanjustice.org with “Criminal Justice Advocate” in the email subject line. Due to high volume, we are unable to respond to all applicants. Only persons selected for an interview will receive a response.

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

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. Applicants with personal experience with the criminal legal system and incarceration are encouraged to apply.