



Our Vision: A community that prioritizes love, compassion, and equity over judgment, shame, and division.

Paralegal

Salary Range: \$46,577 – \$56,257

Kalamazoo Defender is an independent non-profit organization that provides legal representation to the adult indigent population charged with a crime within Kalamazoo County. We take a holistic approach, employing compassionate professionals who work with our clients to identify and address additional needs beyond their legal case. In collaboration with our robust network of area service providers, we aim to connect our clients with relevant support services.

We fight for justice in the courts, care in the community, and dignity in the world. Our mission is rooted in the conviction that poverty and various forms of discrimination put our clients on inequitable footing within and beyond our criminal justice system. Our job is to be their zealous defender in the face of these systemic barriers, fighting for them in court, organizing care for them in our community, and advocating for their inherent dignity in the broader world.

THE JOB:

Kalamazoo Defender is seeking a full-time Paralegal to provide vital support to our legal team by managing case files, drafting legal documents, coordinating attorney calendars, and serving as a key liaison with clients, court officials, and other stakeholders. This position collaborates closely with attorneys, client navigators, investigators, and receptionists, playing an integral role in Kalamazoo Defender's holistic approach to indigent defense. The ideal candidate will be a highly organized and detail-oriented individual, with a passion for equitable access to justice, excellent communication skills, and the ability to juggle multiple tasks in a fast-paced environment. They will be a true team player who exhibits a strong commitment to confidentiality, excels at building relationships with diverse individuals, and aligns closely with Kalamazoo Defender's mission and values.

This role is crucial for ensuring the efficient and effective operation of legal processes, contributing to the organization's commitment to high-quality legal representation.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Manage case files by accurately entering and maintaining detailed client information, notes, and data.
- Draft correspondence, pleadings, motions, and discovery documents; prepare exhibits and case files for hearings or trials.
- Oversee attorney calendars by scheduling client appointments, conferences, teleconferences, dispositions, recording and monitoring evidence-gathering and court appearance dates, pleadings, and filing requirements.
- Represent the attorney in communications with clients, their families, court officials, law enforcement, and other relevant parties, while knowing when to refer matters to attorney.

- Serve as a liaison with prosecutors, probation officers, client navigators, social service providers, and other agencies and jurisdictions, ensuring clear and effective communication.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with clients, providing consistent communication and support from first client contact through case closure by answering or directing inquiries, communicating court dates, Village processes, and other responsibilities by telephone, email, text or in person.
- Process and file legal documents, subpoenas, and other client forms; obtain necessary documents through FOIA requests, subpoenas, and other discovery methods.
- Maintain strict confidentiality of client information in accordance with attorney-client privilege.
- Develop and utilize filing systems, document meeting discussions, maintain transcripts, and organize evidence.
- Enhance job knowledge and contribute to department reputation through ongoing professional development and by delivering excellence in all work products.
- Perform any other duties as assigned, contributing to the overall effectiveness and success of the defense team.

QUALIFICATIONS:

REQUIRED:

- Strong commitment to Kalamazoo Defender's mission and values.
- Ability to work effectively with diverse populations, including individuals with disabilities, those struggling with addiction, and those experiencing mental health crises.
- Commitment to cultural awareness, maintaining professionalism, ensuring confidentiality, and acting with compassion and integrity.
- Exceptional organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Expert keyboard and 10-key numeric data entry skills.
- Excellent interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills.
- Ability to manage high-stress situations with grace, patience, and de-escalation techniques.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office and other basic office technologies and comfortable learning and working with new software, systems, and technology tools.
- Familiarity with criminal court procedures and documentation.
- Impeccable time management.
- Ability to prioritize work tasks while working both collaboratively and independently.

PREFERRED:

- 2+ years of prior experience in administrative support, data entry, or paralegal duties.
- Bilingual abilities.

BENEFITS:

- Health care coverage including medical, dental, and vision, with employee premiums covered 100%.
- Retirement program offering both 403B and Roth options with employer match of 1.5 times employee contributions up to 5%.
- Five weeks of paid time off (pro-rated for start date), paid holiday closures, and additional paid parental leave program.
- Robust employee assistance program that includes services for all household members.
- Optional Flexible Spending and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts.
- Kalamazoo Defender is a Michigan Tri-Share participating employer, which means that qualifying employees may be eligible for childcare assistance, with costs shared between the employee, the employer, and the state.
- An opportunity to work with like-minded, mission-driven individuals in a dynamic and innovative holistic legal program, backed by a county capable of maximizing Kalamazoo Defender's mission.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Kalamazoo Defender is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment for all individuals. We uphold a policy of equal opportunity and prohibit discrimination in any form against employees, employee applicants, directors, board members, interns, clients, volunteers, vendors, or any other individuals associated with our organization. We prohibit discrimination based on race, including

hairstyles associated with race such as braids, locs, twists, afros, cornrows, Bantu knots, etc., sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, including clothing associated with religion such as hijabs, turbans, etc., national origin (ancestry), citizenship status, age, height, weight, pregnancy, ability, socio-economic background or circumstances, military or veteran status, marital or partnership status, genetic predisposition, carrier status, or body art, including piercings and tattoos.

We are committed to maintaining a workplace and environment free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and will comply with and aim to surpass antidiscrimination policies set forth by local, state, and federal laws protecting against such actions.

Kalamazoo Defender values diversity and strives to create an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered to bring their unique perspectives, experiences, and full authentic selves into the space.

HOW TO APPLY:

Kalamazoo Defender is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applicants from all backgrounds to apply.

Please send your resume and cover letter to Jobs@KalamazooDefender.org or to the following address:

Kalamazoo Defender
Attn: Human Resources
151 S Rose St - Ste 200
Kalamazoo, MI 49007