

## **Director of the Public Defense Backup Center New York State Defenders Association**

The New York State Defenders Association (NYSDA) is seeking a Director of the Public Defense Backup Center. NYSDA's Backup Center supports excellence in legal representation of low-income people who are involved in criminal and family courts throughout the State of New York. This position is an exciting opportunity for an experienced lawyer and effective team leader who is passionate about elevating public defense and supporting defenders statewide.

The Backup Center identifies best practices and emerging challenges to high-quality legal assistance and provides public defenders and assigned counsel with support and resources to assist in and elevate their work on behalf of clients. The Director will supervise the Backup Center's staff, which currently includes staff attorneys, Discovery and Forensic Support Unit attorneys, a legal research librarian, a training coordinator, a paralegal, a legal assistant, and a program assistant; the team is expected to continue to grow in the coming year. As a member of NYSDA's leadership team, the Director of the Backup Center will collaborate with NYSDA's other programs to ensure cohesive services that align with the organization's mission and vision for client-centered, high-quality representation around the state.

The Director of the Backup Center will help NYSDA remain abreast of cutting-edge issues, best practices, and evolution of law in criminal, family, and other courts. They will establish goals for the Backup Center to continually enhance its work, and guide efforts to reach those goals. As a team manager, the Director of the Backup Center will establish and monitor the allocation and prioritization of work among team members.

NYSDA, a not-for-profit, membership organization, has been responding to the need for support of New York's public defense community since 1967. NYSDA's mission is to improve the quality and scope of publicly supported legal representation to people who cannot afford counsel. In addition to the Public Defense Backup Center, NYSDA provides services to public defense offices and assigned counsel attorneys around the state through its Veterans Defense Program, Public Defense Recruitment and Retention Program, and Public Defense Case Management System. NYSDA also offers high-quality training to public defense attorneys, investigators, social workers, and other members of the public defense community. The Backup Center is instrumental in assisting defenders around the state to advance quality representation in criminal and family court cases.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

**The Director of the Backup Center will:**

- Oversee direct defender services, including case consultations, training, and publications and resources while ensuring that Backup Center staff have the necessary tools to support representation of the highest quality.
- Supervise the Backup Center's legal team, including the Discovery and Forensic Support Unit, and program staff.
- Collaborate with other NYSDA programs, including the Veterans Defense Program, the Public Defense Recruitment and Retention Program, and the Public Defense Case Management System Team.
- Support NYSDA's decision making and involvement in legal advocacy, including amicus briefs and other aspects of appellate advocacy.
- Develop and maintain in-depth knowledge of New York's public defense system (including criminal, family, and related areas of law), and regarding key legal issues in New York and nationally that impact the work of public defenders with their clients.
- Build and cultivate relationships with other defense organizations, advocacy groups, and grassroots organizations; participate in committees and working groups as appropriate.
- Ensure that Backup Center team members have the tools they need for success, including defined roles and responsibilities, assignments with clear goals and objectives, professional development, and useful and supportive feedback.

The above duties and responsibilities are intended to provide a framework of the position's requirements and are not intended to cover all functions of the role. The Director of the Backup Center may be required to perform other duties as assigned by the Deputy Director or Executive Director.

### **Preferred Qualifications and Experience**

- Admitted to practice law in New York.
- 7+ years of direct criminal defense and/or public defense representation. Experience with family defense representation and/or working within interdisciplinary teams is ideal.
- Successful experience with personnel and team management, ideally in a legal non-profit or social justice organization.
- Alignment with NYSDA's mission to improve the quality of representation in criminal and family defense.
- Excellent legal research and writing, communication, interpersonal, and organizational skills.
- Ability to develop objectives, evaluate effectiveness, and assess needs.
- Ability to travel around New York State, including locations that do not have public transportation.

NYSDA's main office is in Albany, New York. Applicants must be able to work in the Albany office or work remotely in New York State and attend in-person meetings in Albany at least twice a month. The position involves occasional travel to meetings and events in New York and other states, and some evening and weekend hours.

Salary: \$135,000 - \$160,000, depending on experience

The position is eligible for NYSDA's generous benefit package, including paid vacation, personal, sick, and parental leave; health, dental, and vision insurance coverage; flexible spending account; and 403(b) with an employer contribution after one year.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample to Deputy Director Natalie Brocklebank at [nbrocklebank@nysda.org](mailto:nbrocklebank@nysda.org) (subject line: Director of Backup Center). Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Questions about NYSDA or the position are welcome and should also be directed to the Deputy Director.

NYSDA is an equal opportunity employer. NYSDA values diversity, equity, and inclusion and strongly encourages candidates of all identities, orientations, experiences, and communities to apply.