

PUBLIC DEFENDER CLIENT ADVOCATE

Who We Are

Partners for Justice (PFJ) was founded to transform public defense at scale, diminishing the effect of race and wealth on legal outcomes. This means empowering public defenders to assist clients with the underlying drivers of arrest and achieve better legal and non-legal outcomes, ensuring people can walk away from the criminal legal system with their rights, lives, and future intact. PFJ partners with public defenders in 20 states nationwide through our Professional Fellowship program, advisory services, training, and communications.

About the Partners for Justice Professional Fellowship for Client Advocates

PFJ's Professional Fellowship offers a unique opportunity to drive meaningful change while gaining hands-on experience within the criminal legal system. As a Client Advocate, you'll engage in a meaningful fellowship experience designed to make a concrete difference in clients' lives. With training, mentorship, and ongoing support, Advocates are integrated as full-time employees within public defender offices across the country, offering real life exposure to the criminal legal system.

During your Professional Fellowship, you'll become part of a carefully selected national cohort of fellows with aligned passions and goals. Throughout your time, you'll cultivate negotiation, problem-solving, and storytelling skills that will equip you for opportunities beyond your placement. The PFJ Professional Fellowship also offers access to professional development support, funding, mentorship, and assistance in professional and academic applications. Acknowledging the challenges of working inside the criminal legal system, PFJ also supports Advocates with mental health and wellness programming and an Advocate Hardship Fund to address financial emergencies. PFJ also provides relocation assistance to fellows with financial need.

What You'll Do as a Client Advocate

As a Client Advocate Fellow, you'll serve as a full-time, in-person, entry-level employee within a public defender office for up to two years. Advocates play a pivotal role by providing client-led direct service to people facing criminal charges. Each day presents new challenges and opportunities, from direct engagement with clients to collaboration with community partners to going on the record in legal proceedings.

As a Client Advocate you will:

- Build relationships with and interview clients to understand their challenges and priorities, as well as identify potential consequences of an arrest.
- Provide clients with streamlined access to wraparound services, including but not limited to; housing, employment, social and medical benefits, and treatment needs.
- Advocate for clients by engaging with service providers, landlords, employers, prosecutors, judges, and others, conveying clients' stories and needs in a compelling way that gets results.
- Coordinate with legal and social service teams to facilitate collaboration and communication on client cases.
- Partner with attorneys to compose persuasive narrative reports, support arguments, and provide relevant information and records.



- Maintain detailed knowledge of court processes and requirements
- Collect and report data about work and your achievements.
- Actively participate in the Partners for Justice Professional Fellowship program.

Who We're Looking For

Partners for Justice is committed to equity and inclusion in our Advocate selection process. We urge people who have been impacted by the criminal legal system or who share lived experiences with public defender clients to apply for PFJ placements.

As a potential Client Advocate, you will need:

- A demonstrated interest in public service or social justice.
- Strong relationship management skills or customer support experience.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Comfort in working with minimal oversight and the ability to independently structure your own work.
- Past work or volunteer experience within a public defender office, a legal office serving low-income people, or in social service delivery is preferred.
- Reliable transportation.
- Professional-level Spanish language skills are highly valued. Spanish-speaking Advocates in some offices are eligible for a pay increase.
- Interest in working within a public defender's office in one of PFJ's available placement locations – please see our website for more detail. Natives or current residents of these locations are strongly encouraged to apply.

You should be an early-career professional or be willing to accept an entry-level position. Please note that Advocates cannot offer legal or clinical support, and we are unable to place licensed social workers or candidates with JDs.

Compensation and Benefits

Annual compensation ranges from \$40,000 to \$55,000, depending on office placement. In addition to the fellowship's supplemental benefits, employment benefits are specific to the placement office and may vary; however, all placements include medical coverage and paid time off. More information on the compensation and benefits package for specific placements is provided during the interview process.

Application and Selection Process

To apply, visit www.partnersforjustice.org/apply. The application consists of a resume and several short answer questions (3-6 sentences). Short answer responses will be used to assess your writing ability in addition to the substance of your responses. Please be sure to fully complete these questions with a sufficiently lengthy response so that your writing skills can be evaluated. While an unofficial transcript is optional, it is encouraged if applicable.

The PFJ selection process consists of two stages: a pre-recorded first-round interview and a virtual final interview with a PFJ staff person. Additional information on our selection process and timeframe can be found on our [website](http://www.partnersforjustice.org). For any questions, feel free to contact us at apply@partnersforjustice.org.

