YOUTH JUSTICE POLICY MANAGER/DIRECTOR/ATTORNEY
at CHILDRENS LAW CENTER

Children’s Law Center, Inc. (CLC) is a nonprofit legal service center that protects the rights of children and youth — so they can grow up in safe, healthy ways. We achieve our mission through direct legal assistance, policy reform, community education, and information & referral.

Established in 1989, CLC offers vital advocacy in the child welfare system, justice system, education system, and beyond. CLC provides services in Kentucky and Ohio while collaborating with regional and national organizations on youth law and policy.

We invite you to join our passionate, caring, and knowledgeable team.

Position Description: CLC is seeking a passionate, strategic, experienced advocate to lead its youth justice policy efforts in Ohio, including targeted efforts in the Greater Cleveland area. This person will work to advance youth justice advocacy, including reducing the number children who are bound over to the adult criminal-legal system, improving conditions of confinement, promoting community-based interventions for youth misbehavior, and other priorities in accordance with CLC’s objectives and values. This is a full-time position, working collaboratively with CLC’s Executive Director, staff, and statewide partners. The selected candidate will have the title that best matches their credentials.

Location/Travel: The candidate should be based in Ohio, with a preference for those in Greater Cleveland, Columbus, or the surrounding areas. Children’s Law Center is headquartered in Covington, KY, but the position will work remotely and in-person (in the community)—including work on several ongoing projects in Cleveland, occasional work in Columbus (e.g. with the General Assembly), and occasional travel throughout Ohio as needed. The applicant must have the ability to drive with complete access to a vehicle and have reliable access to high-speed internet and a mobile phone.

Primary Responsibilities:

• Lead the development of CLC’s strategic policy goals in collaboration with CLC’s Executive Director, staff, and partners at local and state levels. Work to successfully advance these goals to improve laws, regulations, and practices for youth in or at risk of entering Ohio’s juvenile and adult criminal legal systems.

• Engage authentically with impacted stakeholders, allied organizations, policy makers, and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to achieve policy reform goals and maximum impact.

• Promote systemic improvements for justice-system-involved youth at the local and state levels, with an explicit lens on racial equity and reducing racial and ethnic disparities.

• Track and analyze data trends, publications, workgroups, etc. to be responsive to the evolving youth justice landscape as key opportunities and challenges present.

• Conduct legal analysis and policy research to inform CLC’s Ohio-based policy work, including reviews of laws, statutes, regulations, bills, proposed legislation, caselaw, social science literature, best practices, journal articles, public system data sets, and media research.

• Organize and conduct community education and outreach on relevant legal and policy issues. Develop presentations, fact sheets, reports, white papers, issue briefs, etc.

• Track relevant bills and community initiatives and testify, in writing and in person verbally, before legislative bodies and state and county agencies.

• Cultivate strategic relationships with key government leaders, officials, and system decision makers to support opportunities for positive systems change.

• Foster a robust network of community partners and support and/or lead ongoing collaborative workgroups with community partners, state agencies, advocacy organizations, and others.

• Successfully participate in and manage policy-related communications, including media interviews, newsletters, sign-on letters, press releases, letters to the editor, social media posts, etc.

• Working with CLC’s Development Director, help with occasional grant reports and applications.
• Collaborate with youth and families impacted by the juvenile and adult criminal legal systems to amplify lived experience in CLC’s policy advocacy efforts, including occasional travel to, and communication with those held in, detention and prison facilities throughout Ohio.
• Attend and represent CLC at policy-related meetings, convenings, and/or public hearings, as appropriate, including in-person engagements in Cleveland and Columbus.
• Address individual complaints referred to CLC (e.g., protect the rights of detained/incarcerated youth).
• Develop and supervise student/intern/volunteer projects related to policy. Help to recruit, screen, train, and manage students/interns/volunteers (e.g. reference checks, exit interviews, and feedback), with support from CLC’s Student Program Coordinator, as related to CLC’s policy work. Develop relationships with universities to facilitate CLC’s ongoing internship opportunities in central/northern Ohio.
• If the candidate is an attorney – occasionally counsel, interview, and represent clients (in support of policy goals); draft motions; write amicus briefs; ensure high-quality legal advice, representation, and pro-se guidance. Please note that the ability to represent clients would be an asset for this position – as would previous experience working in court systems to serve young people.

Current Areas of Policy Work:
While CLC’s policy priorities evolve over time, the following are current priority/project areas:
• Advance effective community-based interventions and responses to youth misbehavior (i.e.: age and developmentally appropriate, informed by evidence, best or promising practices, etc.).
• Improve conditions of confinement for youth who are detained in local county juvenile detention facilities, state juvenile correctional facilities, and adult correctional facilities.
• Reduce reliance on “deep-end punishments” for youth—including lengthy youth prison commitments, transfer to adult court, and extreme sentences for youth-adult prison.
• Encourage investments in youth justice that are restorative, transformative, and positively improve safety outcomes in collaboration with key stakeholders.
• Combat adultification of youth and harmful rhetoric in the public discourse – while elevating credible data, amplifying lived experience and youth voice, and promoting practices that treat all children as children.

Qualifications:
• JD and ability to practice law in Ohio (or ability to waive in) is preferred but not required.
• Strong commitment to youth justice advocacy and CLC’s mission and values.
• Proven experience and sophisticated understanding of the youth justice system or in relevant policy advocacy, legal analysis, and research.
• Ability to lead and persuade in a variety of settings.
• Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal; strong attention to detail; and ability to discuss complex and controversial topics with various audiences.
• Ability to work collaboratively and interact appropriately with diverse stakeholders and community partners, including incarcerated persons, victims of crime, community members, policy makers, etc.; ability to excel working with coalitions and networks by fostering interpersonal relationships.
• Dependability, promptness, diligence, and strong organizational skills.
• Entrepreneurship, creativity, critical thinking, and initiative – a self-starter, who can work well independently and remotely. This includes a strong work ethic and communication skills for effective accountability in a remote work position.
• An “advocate mindset” – and if the candidate is an attorney, experience in legal advocacy is preferred.

Direct Supervisor: Sasha Naiman, Executive Director

Preferred: We welcome applicants from a variety of backgrounds, with a preference for those with a J.D. and the ability to practice law in Ohio (or waive in). 4+ years of related experience preferred.

Compensation: $65,000-$73,000 annually, negotiable commensurate with experience. Health, dental, vision, short-term disability, long-term disability, and life insurance coverage available (paid largely by employer). 403(b) retirement program with a 3% employer contribution after 1 year. 20 days PTO.
Application: Please send a resume and letter of interest to Ashley Booher at abooher@childrenslawky.org, with CC to Sasha Naiman at snaiman@childrenslawky.org. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

CLC is an equal opportunity employer. People who have experienced systemic exclusion—including based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, and those who are formerly incarcerated or justice-system-impacted—are encouraged to apply. CLC considers applications from all qualified individuals without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, marital status, citizenship, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.