



LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN  
**LEGAL CENTER**  
*Loving God. Loving People.*

1530 S. Hamlin Avenue | Chicago, IL 60623  
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**Title:** **Holistic Juvenile Defense Attorney**  
**Status:** Full-time Exempt  
**Reports to:** Supervisor of Holistic Juvenile Defense Legal Team  
**Salary:** Commensurate with experience  
**Hire Date:** LCLC will close the posting as soon as we find an exceptional candidate

### **Who We Are**

Lawndale Christian Legal Center (LCLC) specializes in providing a unique form of holistic community-based criminal defense representation grounded in restorative justice principles to minors and emerging adults (24 and under) from North Lawndale. This highly relational and innovative model is performed by an interdisciplinary team of attorneys, case managers, outreach workers, and strategic community partners that provide developmentally appropriate supports for minors and emerging adults. The team identifies and meets the various needs of our youth at every phase of the criminal justice system: from diversion, arrest, through trial, and the completion of any period of probation, supervision, or parole, and beyond. By serving justice-involved minors and emerging adults holistically in their community, LCLC is leading the transformation of the traditional criminal justice system and establishing new best practices in community-based holistic interventions grounded in restorative justice that are more effective, cost less, and result in greater public safety for all. We believe our holistic, community-led (approximately 70% of our staff and Board of Directors are from North Lawndale) restorative justice model will transform the criminal justice system and end mass incarceration. More information on LCLC can be found at [www.lclc.net](http://www.lclc.net).

### **About North Lawndale**

North Lawndale is a vibrant and resilient community and we are proud to be a part of it. Our office is located just next door to the Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Apartments and Exhibit Center, built on the site where Dr. King lived for six months during his Chicago Freedom Campaign in 1966. North Lawndale is tightly-knit, and we are gratified by our affiliation with the Lawndale Community Church, an organization that has done so much to bring necessary health and legal services to the community. Unfortunately, following decades of disinvestment, “white flight”, redlining, and other harbingers of systemic poverty and violence, North Lawndale still suffers from high levels of poverty, economic hardship, violence, and over-policing.

In North Lawndale, approximately 850 officers are assigned to the two police districts that patrol 35,000 residents. In addition, a significant percentage of specialized units (which are historically aggressive and abusive) have been ordered to rove in our community. More than 1,500 youth are arrested in North Lawndale yearly, the second highest rate in Chicago. Indiscriminate stops and searches of North Lawndale residents are a daily occurrence; 66% of adults surveyed perceived no legitimate reason for their most recent police stop. A startling 59% of adults in North Lawndale have been arrested, 30% convicted, and 27% jailed.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds that our youths encounter within North Lawndale, namely the violence, poverty, and police brutality, they demonstrate hope, resolve, and a drive to make their neighborhood a better place. We are continually inspired by our clients’ resilience and positivity in the face of external challenges. It is both an honor and a privilege to help them walk them away from the criminal justice system and equip them to take control of their future.

## **Job Description**

LCLC's Holistic Juvenile Defense Attorney is passionate about representing youth (ages 17 and under) in juvenile court. The attorney's primary responsibility will be to provide LCLC's unique model of holistic, community-based, zealous, and competent legal representation to youth from North Lawndale charged with felonies and misdemeanors. Attorneys partner with case managers, outreach workers, and community allies to provide holistic, restorative legal defense services in juvenile court. Every youth is supported by two attorneys (primary and secondary), a case manager, street outreach support, and connections to wrap around services from community partners. The Holistic Juvenile Defense Attorney reports to the Supervisor of Holistic Juvenile Defense Legal Team.

## **Responsibilities**

- Zealous representation of indigent youth at all stages of juvenile proceedings
- Visiting police stations when a client is in custody (including weekends and evenings)
- Appearing in court for all hearings, from detention to probation status checks
- Conducting or directing case investigations, including witness interviews and scene visits
- Researching, writing, and litigating pre-trial motions
- Serving as first or second chair in hearings and trials
- Creating "mitigation packets" to create a powerful and genuine narrative about a client to use in plea negotiations, with an eye towards avoiding permanent felony convictions and incarceration
- Working closely with LCLC's social services staff, legal interns, and partners to ensure that needed legal and social services are integrated and coordinated for clients
- Collaborating with North Lawndale Community Restorative Justice Hub partners and Cook County system partners to serve our clients holistically and coordinate referrals
- Collaborating with *pro bono* partners on cases at the direction of the Holistic Juvenile Defense Team Supervisor
- Utilizing current social science research about adolescents and emerging adults in approach to clients, court advocacy, and negotiations
- Keeping updated and detailed paper and electronic files and database records
- Continuously seeking professional development through trainings
- Attending meetings internally and with other organizations and agencies

## **Qualifications and Requirements**

- Licensed to practice in Illinois or eligibility for admission to the Illinois bar
- Two to ten years of juvenile or criminal defense trial experience
- Strong trial advocacy skills
- Excellent research and writing skills
- Passion for social justice, particularly as it relates to the criminal justice system
- Cultural sensitivity – ability to work with a diverse staff, clients, and community partners
- Highly resourceful and able to initiate and manage multiple projects and deadlines
- Ability to work in a fast-paced, team-oriented environment
- Ability to work independently and effectively manage an active caseload
- Ability to perform in high stress situations
- Ability to collaborate with an interdisciplinary team
- Familiarity with restorative justice practices a plus

- Willingness to work evenings and weekends as necessary
- Valid driver's license, car, and proof of insurance required
- Individuals from, or with connections to, North Lawndale or adjacent neighborhoods will be given special consideration
- Willingness to live in North Lawndale preferred
- Minorities encouraged to apply

### **Application**

Please submit a cover letter, resume, writing sample, transcript of court proceedings in which you appeared (if available), and a list of three references to: Cathryn Crawford, Director of Holistic Legal Services, care of Cristina Law Merriman [cmerriman@lclc.net](mailto:cmerriman@lclc.net). Include position title in email subject. The position, which is available immediately, will remain open until filled.

*Lawndale Christian Legal Center is an equal opportunity employer. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, genetic information, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, or any other status protected under federal, state, or local law. All aspects of employment including the decision to hire, promote, discipline, or discharge, will be based on merit, competence, performance, and organizational needs. Our goal is to be a diverse workforce that is representative of those we serve.*

***North Lawndale residents and minorities encouraged to apply.***