



JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Director of Legal Support and Community Defense Immigrant Defense Project

Organizational Background

The **Immigrant Defense Project** (IDP) is a New York City-based nonprofit that works to secure fairness and justice for all immigrants by transforming the racially-biased criminal and immigration systems. IDP was founded over twenty years ago to address the crisis of escalating criminalization and mass deportation. Our work attacks the injustices at the intersection of the criminal and immigration systems via a multi-pronged strategy that includes strengthening immigrant defense through technical assistance and trainings, challenging unfair laws through impact litigation, shaping local, state, and federal policy through advocacy, and working alongside communities to build alliances and education.

IDP plays a key role in this pivotal moment for the immigrant justice movement, with the rapid acceleration of criminalization coinciding with attacks on democratic processes and constitutional protections. We are hiring a Director level staff member to manage both IDP's Hotline Program and Padilla Support Center, which are described below. While IDP's Hotline and Padilla Support Center programs have distinct strategies, the approach to resource creation, training materials, and overall goals overlap. The Director will manage the planning and strategy for the two programs, while supporting the supervising Hotline and PSC attorneys who manage the day-to-day operations of each team.

Description of Hotline Program

IDP's Hotline is focused on two substantive goals:

- (1) developing legal analysis of the immigration penalties of criminal convictions to help immigrants and their loved ones and attorneys navigate the legal system; and
- (2) understanding immigrant policing (ICE raids) and using analysis of ICE policing tactics and legal rights to:

- Develop and update Know-Your-Rights resources;
- Support partners providing Know-Your-Right community education;
- Inform IDP's legal strategy, advocacy and policy work, and narrative and message development.

In service of these goals, IDP Hotline staff:

- Provide assistance to immigrant community members who have contacts with the criminal legal system by providing legal analysis and referrals to experienced legal service providers.
- Develop community education materials about immigration policing and the intersection of the criminal and immigration system
- Increase the quality of free representation available to immigrants with criminal legal system contacts by providing technical assistance, resources, and training to legal service providers.
- Provide resources for immigrant advocates about the strategies and tactics used by ICE to arrest, detain, and deport immigrant community members.

Description of Padilla Support Center Program

In 2010, the Supreme Court case *Padilla v. Kentucky* held that immigrants have a right to advice about the immigration impact of a criminal legal system contact from their defense attorney. IDP's Padilla Support Center seeks to ensure that public defenders have the resources to incorporate immigration impacts into their defense strategy and immigrants' constitutional rights to fundamentally fair proceedings that comply with due process requirements are enforced.

In service of these goals, IDP PSC staff:

- Increase the quality of representation available to immigrants represented by public defenders by providing technical assistance, resources, and training to criminal defense attorneys and key criminal legal system stakeholders.
- Screen community members for claims that criminal convictions with immigration impacts were obtained in violation of laws or policies and connect immigrants with counsel to petition courts to overturn unjust convictions.
- Work with partners advocating for reforms of the family policing system to ensure the unique concerns of immigrants and incorporated into advocacy.
- Review pending and proposed state legislation that impacts the rights of immigrants within the criminal legal system and/or family policing system and advocate for laws that increase fairness and due process.

Position Summary

The Director of Legal Support and Community Defense will manage the Hotline and Padilla Support Center teams and hold the overall vision of both teams, including how the work is impacted by ongoing developments in the quickly changing immigration and criminal legal systems. The Director will have latitude to identify and develop FOIA, ICE raids tracking, and other projects designed to help inform IDP about the ongoing needs of immigrant communities and help IDP understand how best to advise immigrants and their loved ones and attorneys about the crim-imm system. The Director will also be responsible for development work related to these projects and tasked with evaluating their work to ensure that it meets IDP's standards for high quality legal and political analysis while achieving impact goals. The Director will speak on behalf of IDP with respect to the work of these programs and collaborate with program leads across the organization to coordinate related activities. The Director will be a member of IDP's Leadership Team, contributing to the overall strategic direction and political positioning of the organization and ensuring IDP's activities and policies further the mission.

Responsibilities

- Directly supervising at least two attorneys who are both holding individual case loads of technical assistance cases and supervising others also holding case loads of technical assistance cases.
- Ensuring development of and compliance with HR, finance, operations, and other organizational policies specific to these programs.
- Defining program goals, objectives, and timelines.
- Developing and execute program work planning for the Hotline and PSC teams that is responsive to the political moment and ensures efficient use of IDP's limited resources to maximize impact.
- Maintaining IDP's case management system for tracking legal work. Ensure IDP quantitative and qualitative data collection a dual function of helping IDP identify and adjust to trends and report activities and impact to funders.
- Facilitating a plan for attorney and community-facing resource and capacity-building trainings, including work related to ICE policing practices
- Monitoring program budget and spending, grant requirements and reporting
- Serving as primary point of contact and holding responsibility for program-specific funding.
- Ensuring all staff have adequate supervision and are accessing peer learning and professional development opportunities.
- Reviewing public facing materials for accuracy and messages consistent with IDP's strategic positioning.

- Developing talking points, presentations, and other materials in preparation for meetings with stakeholders and interviews with the press and speaking on behalf of the organization as needed.
- Identifying and developing shared processes, learnings, and projects with program directors as needed.
- As part of the leadership team, setting the strategic priorities and organizational planning, managing cross-programmatic work, and serving as a key advisor on personnel management, development, and organizational communications issues.

The ideal candidate would have:

- Demonstrated commitment to the rights of immigrants with convictions.
- At least 2 years supervising attorneys or the equivalent and preferably experience managing a programmatic team.
- Ability to manage a case management database to ensure IDP is able to substantively assess information from aggregated case data and report on our work.
- Ability to provide crim-imm legal analysis, including:
 - Analyzing removability and immigration relief based on the INA;
 - Using of post-conviction relief as a removal defense strategy;
 - Analyzing the immigration impact of potential criminal pleas; and
 - Developing strategies for mitigating the impact of convictions during plea negotiations in criminal court.
- Exposure to track trends from ICE raids practices is required (some examples could include: informal tracking on their own cases or within their organizations or teams). Understanding of the mechanics of tracking immigration raids trends is preferred.
- Experience in developing or updating Know Your Rights education materials about Fourth Amendment rights is required.
- Experience working in, or familiarity with, the nonprofit legal service provider and public defender ecosystem in New York State is required, preferably including some familiarity with government contracting, developing a program budget, and managing grant deliverables.

Location

IDP has staff working both fully remotely and in a hybrid mode. There is a strong preference for New York City-area candidates for this role. We are mindful of the need to keep our staff healthy to ensure we can achieve our mission in the long term and believe many people thrive by working remotely and using a flexible schedule.

Salary and Benefits

The salary for this position is \$97,760. IDP recently went through a process to benchmark all salaries and develop a unified salary scale across the organization that is based on the level of job responsibility. This structure helps provide transparency to staff about compensation decisions. Because we are in the process of implementing a benchmarked scale, we do not negotiate salaries with candidates. Our non-negotiation policy is based on information we learned about how people of color, women, people from low-income backgrounds and other marginalized groups are at a systemic disadvantage when negotiating salary and resulting pay disparities.

IDP offers a generous benefits package including:

- 20 vacation days, additional public holidays, and summer Fridays
- Stipend for cell phone and other work from home expenses
- Paid six-week sabbatical after 6 years of employment
- Generous medical and dental benefits
- Commuter benefits, flex spending accounts and generous 401k matching program
- Reimbursement for NY bar registration fees

To apply

The anticipated start date for this position is July 1, 2025. We will be screening applications and interviewing on a rolling basis. Please submit a cover letter and resume to jobs@immdefense.org with the subject line "Director of Legal Support and Community Defense." Writing samples and three references will be requested for those interviewed. Please include your earliest start date in your cover letter. No phone calls please.

The Immigrant Defense Project is an Equal Opportunity Employer that actively recruits women, people of color, persons with disabilities, persons with diverse gender and sexual identities, immigrants, and formerly incarcerated persons.