



Program Director: Allegheny County Court Watch

Position Overview

Over-incarceration and the adverse collateral consequences of criminal prosecutions and convictions are deeply entrenched in Allegheny County. More than 80% of those held in the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ) are not serving a sentence for a criminal conviction, but instead are held pre-trial or on alleged probation violations. More than half of those held in ACJ are being held pending resolution of probation violations, which are often technical violations that do not involve a new charge. The County has a higher incarceration rate of Black people than the national average. While only 13% of the County population is Black, approximately 50% of those held in ACJ are Black.

The Program Director will organize a new community Court Watch program in Allegheny County. The aim of the program is to expose excesses and abuses in the County's criminal legal system to help mobilize the community to fundamentally change the orientation of the system away from punitive responses and towards principles of community control and restorative justice. The program will rely on volunteers in the community to collect, organize, and publicize information in the most strategic and impactful way.

Significant experience with community organizing and advocacy is required prior to applying. The Program Director's job will be to recruit and train volunteers so they can record information during court watching shifts, organize that data into a usable format, and then publicize critical information about the Allegheny County criminal legal system to the public. The Program Director will be responsible for filling any gaps where volunteers may fall short, in order to ensure follow through. Additionally, the Program Director will develop and coordinate relationships with local organizations and activists in order to facilitate community advocacy efforts using the information developed by the program.

Responsibilities

- Initial planning of the Court Watch program
 - Developing methods and materials for court watching
 - How to court watch?
 - Forms for collecting information
 - Spreadsheets for organizing information
 - Identifying issues, courts, judges, and prosecutors to be monitored
 - Visiting prisoners at the Allegheny County Jail
 - Connecting with local organizations and activists with experience in Allegheny County's criminal legal system
 - Scouting courtrooms and watching proceedings
 - Recruiting and training volunteers



- Goal of recruiting and maintaining active participation from 20-30 volunteers each month
- Managing the Court Watch program
 - Organizing regular meetings, ensure meetings are effectively run, actively engage volunteers to increase participation in meetings
 - Scheduling Court Watch sessions with volunteers, actively engaging volunteers to increase follow through – goal of 500 Court Watch sessions completed by end of year
 - Organizing data collected from Court Watch sessions with help of volunteers
- Educating the public
 - Informing the general public about critical information collected by Court Watch
 - Educating elected officials on problems identified by Court Watch
 - Gaining feedback from community organizations and activists on the usefulness of information developed by Court Watch
- Additional responsibilities
 - Maintaining communication with ALC’s litigation team
 - Attending regular ALC staff meetings
 - Participating in ALC fundraising

Requirements

- Significant experience organizing and facilitating volunteers;
- One year or more experience working with a grassroots criminal legal system reform effort;
- Experience working with formerly incarcerated individuals and/or communities impacted by criminalization;
- Familiarity with arguments for and against incarceration, including the prison abolition movement;
- Strong project management skills; and
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills.

Salary and Benefits

The Program Director will be based in ALC’s Pittsburgh office. This is a full-time, salaried position with some evening and weekend hours required. This position has a three-month introductory period. The salary for this position is \$42,000 annually, with a health insurance benefit of up to \$400/month and 35 days (280hrs) of paid time off annually. Start date is January 1, 2020.

Reports to: Director of Community Organizing

Application Process



Please send your resume, two professional references, and a detailed cover letter explaining your interest in the position as a single PDF to info@abolitionistlawcenter.org. Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis, but candidates are encouraged to apply by November 20, 2019 to receive priority consideration. This position is open until filled.

Abolitionist Law Center is an equal opportunity employer. People of color, women, LGBTQI-GNC people, and formerly incarcerated people are strongly encouraged to apply.