



# **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT:**

## **Senior Attorney for Community Defense**

### **Organizational Background and Position**

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 almost thirty 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 Senior Attorney for Community Defense to bridge the critical work of our hotline and community defense team and that of our advocacy team.

### **Hotline and Community Defense**

Our national hotline that provides in-depth legal analysis services for immigrants with New York ties who have had contact with the criminal legal system. Yearly, we respond to hundreds of calls from directly impacted individuals, their loved ones, and advocates. IDP staff answer questions and provide detailed individualized analysis about the impact of criminal legal system contacts—on eligibility for immigration benefits and risks of immigration policing (raids)—as well as referrals for counsel.

Additionally the Hotline Team develops analysis of immigration policing tactics to develop Know Your Rights and other resources for immigrants and partners providing community education, and to inform legal strategy, advocacy and narrative work. Our team also provides trainings to legal service providers to help them serve immigrants who have had contact with the criminal legal system.

## **Advocacy**

IDP's advocacy work seeks to build unity and power to fight for the rights of all immigrants, in particular those with criminal legal system contacts and subject to discriminatory policing, in order to reverse and ultimately end the era of mass criminalization and deportation. Core strategies include identifying interventions to advance and protect the rights of immigrants with criminal contacts and to challenge the logics that fuel their perpetual punishment, expanding and deepening relationships in this work with key partners from community organizations, to legal advocates and elected representatives, and leveraging IDP's expertise on crim-imm issues in pursuit of key change for the communities we fight for.

## **Position Summary**

The Senior Attorney for Community Defense will play a critical role that bridges and strengthens the work of our hotline and advocacy teams, with a focus on tracking ICE policing trends as they relate to people with criminal legal system contacts and/or the impacts of local collusion, developing responsive Know Your Rights and community defense resources and materials, as well as identifying, supporting and implementing strategic advocacy responses to advance IDP's mission and interrupt the harms and narratives related to criminalization of immigrants.

The attorney will be tasked with direct hotline assistance to community members and advocates impacted by ICE policing and raids, managing IDP's systems for tracking ICE policing trends and tactics and collaborating with partners in the field to synthesize information for purposes of resources, advocacy and litigation, and work with the advocacy team and external partners to analyze city and state laws and policies and advance priority campaigns. The attorney will also work with the hotline team to coordinate access to counsel and advocacy support for New Yorkers seeking gubernatorial pardons for immigration purposes.

The attorney will report to the Director of Hotline and Community Defense with additional supervision from our advocacy team.

### Responsibilities:

- Provide day-to-day hotline support and/or follow up with callers impacted by (i) ICE policing and raids as they relate to people with criminal legal system contacts; (ii) ICE policing or risks of contact with ICE as a result of local agencies' collusion; and (iii) the potential to benefit from a gubernatorial pardon for a New York conviction.

- Be the primary point of contact on ICE raids tracking, coordinating with both internal teams and external partners in identifying how current ICE policing trends impact legal advice and strategy, advocacy, narrative and litigation.
- Identify, develop and distribute responsive Know-Your-Rights and community defense materials for community members, advocates and attorneys
- Develop distinct legal and fact-finding projects as needed to help IDP understand how best to advise immigrants and their loved ones and attorneys about the crim-imm system, such as through FOIA and FOIL projects, and help coordinate obtaining litigation support as needed.
- Advance IDP advocacy priorities at the city and state level, through coalition work, work with the mayoral administration and with elected officials as appropriate.
- Cultivate partnerships and alliances with legislators, coalition partners, legal advocates, community-based organizations and rapid response groups to collaborate on community defense and advocacy goals.
- Provide occasional strategic support on federal immigration policy analysis and advocacy projects and foster relationships with the New York Congressional Delegation as appropriate.
- Represent IDP in coalitions, forums, and convenings on priority issues.

## Qualifications

The candidate must have a JD degree. Additionally, the ideal candidate would have:

- Demonstrated commitment to the rights of immigrants with convictions.
- At least three years of relevant experience which may include:
  - Experience practicing law in the state criminal system on behalf of immigrants
  - Experience representing people in removal proceedings, particularly people with criminal legal history
  - Experience with community organizing, advocacy and/or legislative and policy campaigns, particularly but not exclusively in New York
- Demonstrated command of the laws regarding the immigration consequences of criminal convictions, including the categorical approach and related concepts.
- Experience in developing, updating and/or presenting Know Your Rights education materials
- Demonstrated commitment to immigrant rights, racial justice and social justice issues, a belief in the principle that nobody is disposable, and a desire to fight against the mass criminalization, detention and deportation of immigrants impacted by the criminal legal system.

- Ability to work in a respectful, supportive and collaborative manner both internally across teams and externally with individual community members, community-based organizations and other advocates.
- Exceptional organizational and written and oral communication skills; ability to timely respond to and balance numerous tasks/projects.
- Oral fluency in Spanish and/or another top language spoken by immigrant New Yorkers

## **Location**

IDP has staff working both fully remotely and in a hybrid mode. Candidates for this position should be located in the New York City area or be able to travel easily. 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**

Salary is commensurate with relevant experience pursuant to IDP's set compensation structure, and ranges from \$83,232-98,838 per year. 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. For this reason, 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 and additional public holidays. Note: IDP previously had summer Fridays but is currently in a four day work week trial period to be assessed after six months, such that we are closed on all 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 March 2026. We will be screening applications and interviewing on a rolling basis. Please submit a cover letter and resume to [jobs@immdefense.org](mailto:jobs@immdefense.org) with the subject line “Senior Attorney for Community Defense.” Writing samples and three references may 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.