



**Parent/Professional  
Advocacy League**

**Description: Family Support Specialist, Juvenile Justice- Worcester/Hampden Counties**

**Job Type: Part-time (20 hr/week)**

**Location: Worcester/Hampden Counties, MA**

Are you looking to make a difference for Justice involved families in the Worcester/Hampden County, MA area? Are you interested in keeping kids with mental health needs out of the juvenile justice system? Do you have experience with a child involved with juvenile justice and mental health needs? If so, this position may be for you!!

Parent/Professional Advocacy League is a statewide, grassroots family organization that advocates for improved access to mental health services for children, youth and their families. PPAL works with families throughout Massachusetts who need help navigating juvenile justice, mental health, school, and other systems. PPAL's goals are to support families, nurture parent leaders, and work for systems change. We work in close partnership with other community and state agencies to improve outcomes for all youth and families. More information about PPAL can be found at <https://ppal.net>.

Juvenile Justice (JJ) Family Support Specialists at PPAL help engage and support families of youth who are (or at risk of becoming) juvenile justice involved. You must be passionate about and committed to improving outcomes for justice-involved youth by empowering and educating their parents/caregivers through family voice, family engagement, and participation in strong family/system/provider partnerships. You *must* have experience raising a child, youth, or young adult with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs, and juvenile justice involvement.

**In this position, you will:**

- Provide information and referral to families and professionals around resources and services
- Empower families to advocate for their own child and family by providing and/or creating skill building opportunities
- Attend and be involved in training families in telling their own story
- Visit detention facilities in the region to engage parents
- Represent family voice and prepare parents to represent family voice on various committees with a purpose of system change

- Participate in Juvenile Justice related meetings and community events; and develop and maintain partnerships with relevant community partners.
- Participate in marketing and outreach campaigns to generate awareness and accessibility of PPAL's services in the applicable communities, schools, and psychiatric and medical provider offices
- Conduct presentations, trainings, and workshops as determined with the Program Manager, and assist with all other program deliverables
- Adhere to and implement PPAL's policies, procedures, and data collection to support the efficient and effective operation of the JJ Program and PPAL
- Identify and regularly report to the Program Manager areas of needed improvement within PPAL and the JJ and mental health systems and make recommendations for improvement

### **You're a good fit if ...**

- You are compassionate, passionate, and motivated
- You have raised or are raising a child, youth, or young adult with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs and who is or has been JJ system involved (or you have been yourself)
- You have strong time management and prioritization skills
- You enjoy outreach, family engagement and empowerment, and relationship building with community partners, courts and DYS personnel, other professionals, and policy makers
- You value cultural awareness and want to ensure that issues of diversity, inclusion, disproportionality, and cultural responsiveness are thoughtfully considered
- You have excellent organizational skills, and are a good listener and communicator
- You value open, effective, and timely communication with others
- You are able to work independently with supervision as needed
- You have the ability to work collaboratively with a wide variety of people in complex situations.
- You have a strong desire to support PPAL's mission of improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and families, including those that are justice involved
- You have a valid MA driver's license and have reliable transportation - driving is required.
- You can accommodate some evening and weekend work as needed

If this describes you, let's talk! Interested candidates should submit their resume and a cover letter which includes your personal/lived experience with children's mental health to [apply@ppal.net](mailto:apply@ppal.net).

This is a 20 hour/week part-time position with an hourly pay range of \$20 to \$22 per hour based on experience. This position is currently hybrid - office, home, and community based, as determined by PPAL. PPAL's office is in Westborough, MA. Bilingual preferred.