



**THE
CRISIS**

We are in the midst of an unprecedented narrative battle over the public’s basic intuitions about crime and punishment, and what it will take to achieve public health and safety. Yet for decades, lawmakers and the media have listened to police and prosecutors,

overlooking the perspective, voice, and expertise of those closest to mass criminalization. As a result, misinformation spreads, fear wins out over reason, and the status quo prevails. Zealous aims to right this historic imbalance.

**OUR
MISSION**

Zealous is a national advocacy and education initiative dedicated to challenging and transforming unjust legal systems through media, storytelling, and the arts. Zealous trains and supports local coalitions of advocates, public defenders, artists, and

the people and communities directly impacted by the legal system in their pursuit of justice. **The ultimate goal:** To achieve enduring policy change to end mass criminalization.

CURRICULUM:

Zealous designs and implements trainings, law school courses, and toolkits on media, storytelling, communications, and policy advocacy for public defenders and future social justice leaders.

CAMPAIGNS:

Zealous supports local partners to develop cutting-edge social justice advocacy campaigns that harness technology, arts, media, and firsthand storytelling strategies.

**THE
WORK**

MEDIA SUPPORT:

Zealous builds relationships between journalists and public defenders, social justice advocates, and directly-impacted people to ensure their perspectives and insights influence media coverage of legal issues. We help pitch stories, find sources, influence reporting, and draft commentaries.

**THE
IMPACT**

In just the last two years, Zealous **has trained** over 1,000 public defenders and reached hundreds of **law students** with our original curriculum and programs, supported local partners in the launch of over a dozen **cutting edge, story-driven media advocacy campaigns**, and driven **reporting** and **commentaries** on **crime** and **policy** by connecting journalists to local sources that are often overlooked. Our partners include defender offices and the communities they

serve, artists and storytellers, technologists and coders, organizers, journalists, arts and civil rights organizations, and academic institutions. The issues we have worked on include pretrial detention in Chicago and Texas, to solitary confinement in Michigan, non-unanimous juries in Oregon, court accountability in Prince George’s County Maryland, and fines and fees in Louisiana.

**THE
POSITION**

Public defenders and defender offices are an untapped reservoir of expertise and energy to dismantle and transform the criminal legal system. For too long, however, those in power have undermined public defenders, keeping funding at low levels, discrediting defenders as representing undeserving “criminals,” and denying them a place at the table. Defenders have also been hesitant to speak up outside the courtroom and join movements for social and racial justice.

discourse about systemic issues. The community of public defenders who are willing and eager to engage in this form of advocacy is expanding rapidly. Zealous is uniquely positioned to support this continued growth.

Public defenders have the potential to be effective and powerful advocates outside the courtroom by leveraging media (social and traditional) and storytelling to influence the public and political

Zealous works with public defenders to expand their vision of what public defense means and the advocacy tools they have at their disposal. We do so by conducting trainings with defenders and defender offices on a range of storytelling and advocacy skills they never learned in law school. We have also taught and are expanding our law school curriculum for future advocates and defenders.



**THE
POSITION**

Skills taught include: coalition building, campaign development, communications and storytelling, relationship development, engaging clients as partners, working with press, developing new media advocacy strategies, working with artists as true collaborators, and using social media ethically and effectively.

Finally, starting this coming year, we are poised to support a variety of offices, including in Chicago, Harris County, New Orleans, and Los Angeles, to

establish office processes for ethical and effective story collection, collaboration, and social media use.

All of this work has the potential to expand beyond individual partnerships and ad hoc communications to a coordinated, national network of public defenders who are aligned, activated, and supported. In collaboration with the Zealous leadership team, this position will lead the development and cultivation of this work.

BUILDING lasting and mutual relationships with public defender offices across the country, sensitive to the unique needs and contexts of each jurisdiction, and maintaining and strengthening pre-existing ones.

SERVING as the point-person for public defender offices in which Zealous is working to establish internal processes and policies.

CO-DEVELOPING and co-facilitating trainings for public defenders on a range of non-traditional advocacy skills.

CO-DESIGNING, pitching, and teaching new law school and practice-clinic curriculum, as well as supervising clinical student projects.

DEVELOPING strategies, including a recurring newsletter, on and off-line events, networks and community tools, to build and nurture the growing community of advocacy-minded defenders.

CREATING and maintaining an interactive database for national defender story collection to track the wide range of injustices defenders see across the country and come up with creative and effective ways to share these stories with the media and the public.

LEADING social media engagement strategies for public defenders to increase engagement, improve the quality of defender social media, and ensure posts are all effective and ethical.

CO-DEVELOPING and supporting the community of defenders and journalists, including ongoing listening and learning sessions between journalists and defenders on a range of topics and issues in different localities.

COLLABORATING with Zealous' commentary and communications practice, working with public defenders to conceive of, draft, and revise commentaries for national publications on the everyday injustices that they see inside and outside the courtroom.

WORKING with the Director of Collaborative Advocacy to contemplate the dynamics of defender advocacy and building trust with directly-impacted communities.

COLLABORATING with Zealous regional leads on campaign work with defender offices in their respective jurisdictions.

**ESSENTIAL
DUTIES**



JD required.

You have at least 3 years of current or past experience as a practicing public defender.

You believe — if done ethically and effectively — that public defenders have an important role to play in supporting the movement for racial and social justice.

You have experience managing, developing, and implementing advocacy work in partnership with grassroots movements and people directly impacted by criminal legal systems.

Ideally, you have significant experience and love for teaching, training, and supervision of students and/or newer public defenders and experience developing and implementing curriculum.

You maintain a deep knowledge of the criminal “justice” system from personal experience working within it and driving policy and strategy outside of it.

You understand our current carceral approach to public health and safety as fundamentally flawed, cruel, and racist, and desire to transform it, not just “Reform” it.

You are both exceptionally entrepreneurial, profoundly collaborative and are excited about working at the axis of media and justice.

You are a bold visionary, a creative thinker who is not afraid to introduce “crazy” or “bad ideas” in service of new ideas and concepts, a “super connector” who can see and forge unexpected relationships between people and projects for impact. You are a “bridge builder.”

You share a commitment to the importance of transformative legal and policy change through excellent advocacy, media, and storytelling.

You have outstanding communication and writing skills, particularly the ability to translate complex legal and policy speak into digestible, powerful, and actionable advocacy messaging. You can look at a blank page and “get words down” even if they aren’t perfect, to spark collaboration with your team.

You embody strong work ethic and dependability, including demonstrated ability to be self-directed, take initiative, and work independently, all in a remote workspace.

You are committed to cultivating diversity and lifting up under heard voices.

You feel good about working remotely, in a creative, energetic start-up environment with a team based in various states around the country.

**KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILLS**

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Willingness to work nights and weekends when necessary, and travel occasionally.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

May live anywhere in the U.S.

SALARY AND BENEFITS:

Competitive



**APPLICATION
PROCESS**

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

January 28, 2022

To apply, please send resume and letter of interest stating clearly which position(s) you are interested in to careers@zealo.us.

**PLEASE
NOTE**

This position's exact title is TBD and will be based on experience.

We are in the process of a complete overhaul of our [website](#). The information on our site does not reflect the full scope of our work. For the most current information on Zealous' past, present, and future work and impact, [please see this appendix](#) and [our latest video on what we've been upto this past year](#).
