About Safe & Just Michigan

Safe & Just Michigan (SJM) envisions a Michigan in which all are safe in their communities and everyone is responsible for creating accountability, safety and justice. We work to reduce the harm caused by both crime and unnecessary incarceration.

Safe & Just Michigan advances evidence-based reforms that can improve public safety and eliminate unnecessary and wasteful corrections spending. We conduct research, educate, advocate, and mobilize support for smart investments in services and programs proven to reduce crime and promote healthy, thriving communities.

Research Specialist Position Description

The research specialist is SJM's dedicated researcher, and in that role gathers and analyzes the organization's criminal justice data. As such, the research specialist plays an important role in policy development, communications, and legislative advocacy. The position reports to the executive director.

This full-time position is headquartered Lansing, but arrangements may be made to telecommute as appropriate for the position.

Responsibilities

Research and policy development:

- Work in consultation with our lobbyist, executive director, and policy analyst to develop a research agenda and legislative goals and strategies that advance SJM's strategic plan.
- Facilitate innovative and effective use of SJM's constituent data to advance our work.
- Participate in research study design and data collection protocols.

- Participate in data collection through document review, interviews, and surveys.
- Identify data needs and develop information to support policy initiatives and respond to inquiries and opposition messaging.
- Conduct original research and analysis on Michigan criminal justice data and prepare research reports with findings and policy recommendations.
- Review and edit original research and analysis conducted by partner organizations and act as the staff liaison for joint or contract research projects as needed.
- Analyze Michigan's budget to identify opportunities and challenges related to the execution of SJM's objectives and report findings.
- Stay abreast of current state and national criminal justice research/policy developments/best practices that may affect SJM's agenda.
- Other duties as assigned.

Legislative advocacy:

- Work closely with the organization's policy analyst and lobbyist(s) to develop, explain, and promote SJM's policy agenda in a way that engages diverse audiences.
- Partner with the communications team to create effective written internal and external communications on policy matters, including data visualizations.
- Review written support for advocacy positions, including briefing materials, presentations, reports, and handouts that communicate policy material, emphasizing accuracy and political tone.
- Work with the policy analyst to evaluate pending legislation and develop recommendations for SJM's response; draft amendments and provide data and policy impact information to staff, policy makers, and stakeholders.
- Work with the policy analyst to review, support/oppose, draft, amend, and/or explain legislation.
- Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

The research specialist must have the following attributes:
- Demonstrated commitment to criminal justice reform and to SJM's mission.
- Experience with data management and analysis using statistical software (Stata, R, SAS, and/or SPSS).
- Substantial knowledge of corrections, sentencing, and parole policies.

- Writing and editing skills that include close attention to detail and accuracy, as well as the ability to effectively convey key content to a broad spectrum of audiences, from experts to the general public.
- Ability to analyze data from multiple sources with close attention to detail.
- Project management skills, with experience leading complex long-term projects.
- Time and resource management skills and the ability to meet ambitious, measurable goals.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of relevant education and experience; advanced degree in a research-focused field (e.g., social science, statistics, law) preferred.
- A minimum of two years' experience in:
  - Criminal justice or social policy research and writing.
  - Reading and accurately summarizing legal, statutory, regulatory, and research materials.
  - Reviewing, evaluating, and accurately communicating relevant data, statistics, and research findings to explain the impact of policy proposals.

Compensation

Salary is based on experience and qualifications. Benefits include generous paid leave time and a comprehensive health care package.

To Apply

Email a cover letter expressing your interest in this position, along with your resume, a writing sample, and at least two professional references to **john@safeandjustmi.org**. Please include "Research Specialist" in the subject line. Only applicants with a complete submission of the requested information will be considered.

This position will remain open until filled. SJM is seeking to fill this position as soon as possible. We will conduct interviews of preferred candidates on a rolling basis as we receive application materials. Only applicants selected for interviews will be contacted. No phone calls, please.

Safe & Just Michigan considers all qualified applicants and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, prior record of arrest or conviction, citizenship status, current employment status, or military/veteran status in employment. Safe & Just Michigan values diverse experiences, including educational background and justice system involvement.