



HIGH PLAINS REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

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RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT: CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

Post Date: August 6, 2025
Salary: \$160,000 plus benefits, limited private civil practice permitted if all chief public defender duties are carried out
Job Type: Full-time
Closing Date: August 31, 2025

The High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office is a full-time public defense organization dedicated to serving rural communities in the Southwest Texas Panhandle. Comprising twelve counties spanning 11,682 square miles, a combined population of 98,465, and possessing the rare combination of stunning natural attractions and affordable cost of living, the Llano Estacado is one of the best kept secrets in Texas.

As Chief Public Defender you will be presented with a unique and meaningful opportunity to lead the next phase of development for a holistic, client-centered public defender office.

Summary

The High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office provides high quality legal representation to adults and juveniles who cannot afford counsel. The Office is a full-service firm that accepts felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and first appeals of right cases arising in Bailey, Briscoe, Castro, Cochran, Dickens, Floyd, Hale, Motley, Parmer, Swisher, Terry, and Yoakum counties. Staff attorneys are supported by one full-time investigator along with two full-time social workers. An office manager and two support staff, complete the team.

The Chief Public Defender leads an office of up to fifteen employees including up to nine (9) attorneys, with the goal of representing approximately 85% of the appointed criminal and juvenile cases (all cases except those where conflicts of interest arise) in the service area. The Chief, and all team members, are full-time employees of Hale County and receive the County's employee benefits package, including health insurance and retirement. While the Chief is not intended to carry a caseload, serving as second chair trial counsel is an important component of the Chief's mentoring duties. Residency in any county within the service region or Lubbock, Texas must be established within six months of hire.

Job Responsibilities

The Chief Public Defender ensures that every client receives high quality criminal defense representation in accordance with federal and state constitutions, state statutes and ethical rules, and state and national best practices, particularly holistic, client-centered representation.

The duties listed below are intended as illustrations of the types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is a similar, related, or logical function of the position.

The Chief:

- Hires, supervises, mentors, evaluates, disciplines, and dismisses attorneys and staff;

Bailey | Briscoe | Castro | Cochran | Dickens | Floyd | Hale | Motley | Parmer | Swisher | Terry | Yoakum

- Manages financial planning and budgeting for the Office and advocates for future services and budgetary needs of the Office;
- Prepares the annual budget and submits required financial, statistical, and progress reports to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) and works closely with the Hale County Auditor to ensure compliance with all grant rules and conditions.
- Monitors attorney caseloads in compliance with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission's caseload guidelines.
- Establishes and maintains respectful and productive relationships with county and district judges, commissioners courts, and county personnel, including sheriff's and prosecutors' offices in each county.
- Maintains open lines of communication with HPRPDO staff, the Oversight Board, county officials, and TIDC. Provides timely updates that promote transparency and build trust.
- Ensures that all attorneys and staff are trained to comply with state and federal constitutions, state and federal laws, ethical rules, and best practices, including holistic, client-centered representation.
- Mentors staff including newly licensed attorneys and assists staff in brainstorming case specific legal issues, disposition options, and advocacy.
- Allocates resources for services, equipment, and facilities while remaining within budgetary constraints.
- Presents to social and civic groups and other organizations to publicize and promote HPRPDO.
- Represents the High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office in public and professional meetings and conferences and in meetings with state, county, and municipal officials; county and state bar associations; and citizen groups.
- Regularly reports to the High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, the Hale County Commissioners Court, and, upon request, the commissioners courts of participating counties.

Minimum Qualifications

Candidates should possess:

- Juris Doctor degree;
- Texas bar license or the ability to obtain Texas bar licensure within four months;
- Some knowledge of grant management and compliance;
- 10 years or more actively engaged in the criminal law arena;
- Advanced knowledge of the rules of evidence, criminal case law, the Texas Penal Code, and the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure;
- Leadership, criminal defense litigation, supervision, management, budgeting, and organizational skills; and,
- Ability to motivate, train, supervise, and develop attorneys and support staff.

Application

If public defense is your passion and devoting your time and talent to creating the best public defender's office in Texas is an exciting proposition, we'd be delighted to visit with you. Please submit a resume and letter of interest to: hr@hprpdo.org.

HPRPDO is an equal opportunity employer. We offer a welcoming and inclusive environment in service to one another, the diverse clients we represent, and the communities we call home. We are committed to, and our work is animated by, the belief that everyone is deserving of kindness, empathy, and respect.