



HIGH PLAINS REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE
500 BROADWAY STREET, PLAINVIEW, TX 79072
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RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT: Assistant Misdemeanor Public Defenders

Post Date: January 20, 2025

Salary: Based on experience plus benefits with Hale County, Texas.

Attorney will not be permitted to maintain a civil practice.

Job Type: Full-Time Assistant Misdemeanor Defender

Closing Date: Open Until Filled

The High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office is Texas' newest public defender office and the first ever, full-time public defense organization dedicated to serving rural communities in the Southwest Texas Panhandle. Composed of thirteen counties spanning 11,682 square miles, a combined population of 116,050, and possessing the rare combination of stunning natural attractions, all manner of cultural activities, affordable cost of living, and easy access to high quality medical care, shopping, and airports in Amarillo and Lubbock, the Llano Estacado is one of the best kept secrets in Texas.

As a HPRDPO misdemeanor public defender you will be presented with a unique and meaningful opportunity of being a significant part of a holistic, client-centered public defender office built from the ground up.

General Summary

This position provides a full range of legal services to indigent defendants in the assigned felony and misdemeanor cases. Primary responsibility is to handle the misdemeanor caseload. Additional responsibilities to assist in felony caseload, trial preparation and trials, as directed. These positions are set to begin on or about October of 2024 in Hale or Hockley County, Texas.

Job Responsibilities

Under the supervision of the Chief Public Defender, Deputy Public Defender and Misdemeanor Lead Assistant Public Defender, this position will provide legal representation to clients appointed to the Public Defender's Office charged with misdemeanors only.

- Meets with clients when arrested and obtains their history to make bond arguments to the court.
- Establishes close contact with client by regular visits to the correctional facility or by constant correspondence via personal visits to HPRDO, phone contact or by letters to clients not in custody.
- Meets with the client to discuss the appropriate action to be taken and whether pretrial motions should be filed.
- Research case law, constitutional provisions and statutes.
- Investigates alleged crime or offense by meeting with witnesses, police officers and reviewing the facts.

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- Communicates with client to determine trial strategy such as cross-examination procedures, witness selection, jury selection and testimony.
- May be assigned to handle cases seeking appellate relief or on felony caseload, as needed.
- Strategizes with HPRPDO team.
- Performs as trial counsel by representing clients during courtroom proceedings.
- Help HPRPDO Intake Team operate professionally, accurately and efficiently.
- Ensure that office duties and special projects, if any, are timely completed.
- Assist in maintaining accurate, confidential records documenting services and representation provided.
- Obtain and review discovery and documents provided by the prosecution.
- Research and investigate issues and cases.
- Meet with clients as necessary.
- Return all telephone calls and other communication from or on behalf of clients.
- Prepare and file pleadings for trial.
- Maintain written correspondence with clients during pretrial, trial and post-trial process.
- Prioritize and organize workload to meet deadlines.
- Maintain awareness of new court decisions, laws, rules and regulations.
- Meet with investigator(s) to monitor the progress of investigations.
- Prepare cases for court and conduct trials as assigned.
- Provide narrative and descriptive entries in client files of opinions, impressions and facts collected.
- Negotiate with prosecutors and others involved in the court process.
- Advise clients on plea offers, options and potential for success at trial or other dispositions of cases.
- Advise clients of constitutional rights waived by pleading guilty and the potential direct and collateral consequences of a guilty plea.
- Select juries, examine and cross examine witnesses, draft and argue jury instructions and argue cases to the jury.
- Advise non-citizen clients of the specific immigration consequences of criminal convictions.
- Attend conferences, in-house trainings and stay current on legal updates.
- Perform related tasks consistent with skills, abilities, and general responsibilities, including supervision of staff, as assigned to support HPRPDO.

Supervision

- **Received:** Will be supervised by the Chief Public Defender, the Deputy Public Defender and Misdemeanor Lead Assistant Public Defender.
- **Given:** Some supervision of team in context of work based on ethics rules.

Minimum Qualifications

Candidates should possess:

- Juris Doctor degree;
- Texas bar license or the ability to obtain Texas bar licensure within a year from date of hire;
- Law grads, those studying for the bar exam, and those awaiting bar results will be considered;

Preferred Qualifications

Priority will be given to candidates who meet or exceed the criteria listed below:

- Must possess the skill and ability to manage a demanding and diverse caseload;

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- Has litigated criminal cases for at least 2 years or more years;
- Has tried at least several misdemeanor cases to verdict;
- Has worked as a criminal defense lawyer or a public defender in state court for 1 or more years;
- Has misdemeanor first chair trial experience; and
- Has represented clients as a member of trial teams.

Certificates, Licenses, Registrations and Other

- Member in good standing of the State Bar of Texas
- Valid driver's license
- Reliable motor vehicle.

Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities

Advanced computer, research and writing skills including trial advocacy, legal research and library skills. Verbal and written communication and organizational skills; interpersonal skills and ability to deal effectively with the public, other employees and elected officials; skilled in problem solving and decision-making. Must have high degree of case evaluation and advocacy skills. Knowledge of trial procedures and rules of evidence. Advanced knowledge of state and federal laws, codes and regulations pertaining to area of assignment; knowledge of philosophy and practices of public defense.

Physical Demands

Typical activities common to an office environment such as walking, sitting, use of computer equipment, creating and moving paper files, operating a copy machine, walking to and from court as needed. Some driving to multiple counties will be necessary.

Work Environment

HRPDO attorneys are expected to use professional courtesy, discretion and sound judgment when engaging in contact with co-workers, clients, prosecutors, judges, other county employees and members of the public. Attorneys and non-attorney staff are also responsible for maintaining confidentiality of client information and business knowledge.

Application

HRPDO is delighted to visit with you if public defense is your passion and devoting your time and talent to providing top notch criminal defense representation in the best rural public defender's office in Texas.

To Apply: Please email your resume and letter of interest to hr@hprpdo.org with the subject line, "HRPDO Misdemeanor Assistant Public Defender Positions – <Last Name>, <First Name>."

HRPDO 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.

