



HIGH PLAINS REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE
500 BROADWAY STREET, PLAINVIEW, TX 79072
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RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT: DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

Post Date: January 20, 2025

Salary: Based on experience plus county benefits package

Job Type: Full-Time Deputy Public Defender.

NOTE: Attorney will not be permitted to maintain an outside practice

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 the HPRPDO Deputy 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

The Deputy Public Defender position provides a full range of legal services to indigent clients in the assigned felony and misdemeanor cases in a functional supervision capacity. Specifically, the primary responsibility is to ensure the effective assistance of counsel and efficiency at all stages of HPRPDO cases by embracing a team-based approach, emphasizing skill development at all stages, supporting attorney defenders' performance as an expert trial resource, underscoring communication with team/client/witness/families and modeling the utmost integrity. Additional responsibilities for this position include being a dedicated managing presence at dockets, hearings and trials including as co-counsel especially on complicated or complex cases whether felony or misdemeanor to help the HPRPDO's talented teams continuously grow. The Deputy Public Defender is also expected to assist with trainings of attorney defenders and non-attorney staff. The anticipated start date is on or about August of 2024 in Hale County, Texas.

Job Responsibilities

Under the supervision of the Chief Public Defender, the Deputy Public Defender will provide legal representation to clients appointed to the Public Defender's Office and lead the misdemeanor and felony attorney defenders as follows:

- Carry a limited, complex caseload while supervising, managing, and second-chairing cases with Assistant Public Defenders throughout the service region.
- Regular and reliable attendance is required to perform management duties at dockets, hearings and trials and the main office in Hale County, Texas and in Hockley County, as needed.
- Provide team-oriented leadership that prioritizes respectful and productive workplace relationships and meaningful participation as well as maintain a safe and healthy workplace environment.
- Ability to manage a schedule that varies daily according to the Deputy's docket, management duties, and mentoring needs.

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- Develop and present in-house training programs for Assistant Public Defenders and non-attorney staff.
- Meet with Assistant Public Defenders and non-attorney support staff on a regular basis to answer questions and address concerns.
- Meet with investigator(s) and social worker(s), along with assigned Assistant Public Defender, to monitor the progress of investigations and social services in cases.
- Meet with Assistant Public Defenders, collectively and individually, to monitor progress of their cases and caseloads.
- Maintain flexibility to help Assistant Public Defenders with problem solving whether anticipated or immediate and unexpected.
- Mentor Assistant Public Defenders regarding issues related to local and state laws, the Code of Criminal Procedure; immigration consequences and state-specific immigration laws; department and county policies and procedures; their cases, strategy, client relationships, and other related topics.
- Apply and exercise sound ethical judgment and expert level criminal defense skills in advising Assistant Public Defenders and HPRPDO team members.
- Assist in completing Annual Performance Reviews of HPRPDO attorneys and staff.
- Assist the Appellate Attorney when needed based on caseload or complexity of legal issues presented and supervise the Case Intake Team.
- Identify programs and practices that are HPRPDO priorities and ensure that HPRPDO staff are aware of these resources and trained to utilize such programs and practices effectively.
- Communicate on a regular basis with the Chief Public Defender concerning trial dockets, pleas, hearings and team updates, including the team's successes/questions/issues/concerns.
- Ensure that communications receive a prompt response, and special projects are timely completed.
- Assist in preparing required reports.
- Maintain awareness of new court decisions, laws, rules and regulations and issue timely updates to HPRPDO attorneys and staff.
- Attend state-wide conferences, inter-agency meetings, and serve on committees, as appropriate.

Supervision

Will be supervised by the Chief Public Defender and will supervise, guide and provide hands-on assistance, when necessary, to the HPRPDO attorneys and staff.

Minimum Qualifications

Candidates should possess:

- Juris Doctor degree;
- Texas bar license or the ability to obtain Texas bar licensure within four months;
- Advanced research, writing, and advocacy skills;
- 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;
- Must possess the skill and ability to manage a demanding and diverse caseload; and
- Ability to motivate, train, supervise, develop assistant public defenders and non-attorney team members.

Preferred Qualifications

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

- Has been practicing law for 10 or more years;
- Litigated criminal cases for at least 5 years and tried at least 15 or more felony cases to verdict;
- Worked as a criminal defense lawyer or a public defender in state court for 5 or more years;
- Extensive first chair jury trial experience;
- Appellate experience;

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- Supervisory, management or team lead experience in criminal or public defense offices or prosecution legal environment;
- Experience in the defense of complex criminal cases such as capital murder, homicide, sexual assault, and/or child pornography; and
- Represented clients as a member of trial teams.

Certificates, Licenses, Registrations and Other

- Member in good standing of the State Bar of Texas or ability to waive in.
- Must possess reliable transportation and valid driver's license.

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 on a regular basis to provide oversight and to keep the Chief Public Defender informed and updated about clients, docket management, attorney defenders, non-attorney staff along with successes, issues and concerns.

Work Environment

HPRPDO 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

HPRPDO 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, "HPRPDO Deputy Public Defender Position – <Last Name>, <First Name>."

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.