



HIGH PLAINS REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE
500 BROADWAY STREET, PLAINVIEW, TX 79072
HR@HPRPDO.ORG

RECRUITMENT ANNOUNCEMENT: CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

Post Date: January 2, 2024
Salary: \$160,000 plus benefits
Job Type: Full-time
Closing Date: February 1, 2024

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 Chief Public Defender you will be presented with a unique and meaningful opportunity: creating a holistic, client-centered public defender office from the ground up.

Summary

The High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office will provide high quality legal representation to adults and juveniles who cannot afford counsel. The Office is expected to be a full-service firm that accepts felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and first appeals of right arising in Bailey, Briscoe, Castro, Cochran, Dickens, Floyd, Hale, Hockley, Motley, Parmer, Swisher, Terry, and Yoakum counties. Recognizing the increasing complexity of criminal defense practice and that clients suffering from mental health conditions and substance use disorders are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, trained staff attorneys will be supported by two full-time investigators along with two full-time social workers. An office manager, and two support staff will complete the team.

The Chief Public Defender will lead an office of approximately twenty attorneys and seven staff who will provide representation in 85% of the cases filed across the service region each year. The Chief, as well as every team member, will be a full-time employee of Hale County and will receive the same benefits package as every other County employee. The Chief will not carry a caseload although serving as second chair trial counsel is considered an important component of the Chief's mentoring duties. Outside legal work is prohibited and residency in any county comprising the service region 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 only as illustrations of the various 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.

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

The Chief:

- Hires, supervises, mentors, evaluates, disciplines, and dismisses attorneys and staff;
- 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;
- Assists staff in brainstorming case specific legal issues, disposition options, and advocacy;
- Allocates resources for services, equipment, and facilities;
- Manages financial planning and budgeting for the Office and advocates for future services and budgetary needs of the Office;
- Supervises planning, development, preparation, and monitoring of annual budget, grant funding, and statistical reports;
- Represents the public defense function in criminal justice coordinating meetings with clients, judges, prosecutors, commissioners, and others;
- Presents to social and civic groups, incarcerated persons, and other organizations to explain, publicize, and promote HPRPDO and defendants' rights;
- Represents the High Plains Regional Public Defender's Office in appropriate public and professional meetings and conferences; in interactions with state, county, and municipal officials; county and state bar associations; and citizen groups; and
- 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;
- 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; and
- Ability to motivate, train, supervise, and develop attorneys and support staff.

Preferred Qualifications

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

- Has led a legal organization as chief, director, or deputy chief for at least 5 years;
- Has litigated criminal cases for at least 7 years and tried at least 15 cases to verdict;
- Has worked as a criminal defense lawyer or a public defender for at least 5 years;
- Has served as a supervisor for 4 years and supervised at least 5 attorneys and/or staff;
- Has managed daily operations for a legal organization for at least 4 years;
- Has either created, or helped to create, an organizational budget or exercised significant oversight of an organizational budget.

Application

If public defense is your passion and devoting your time and talent to constructing the best rural public defender's office in Texas is your goal, we'd be delighted to visit with you. **To Apply:** Please email your resume and letter of interest to hr@hprpdo.org with the subject line, "HPRPDO Chief 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.

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