



Class Code: 1- 0473
FLSA: Exempt
EEO: 01
Bargaining Unit: 01
Revised: 9/2024

ASSISTANT CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

DEFINITION

Under administrative direction, plans, directs, coordinates and oversees the administrative and management functions of the Public Defender Division; conducts and directs the defense of complex felony cases; provides efficient and effective legal defense services to indigent individuals charged with crimes in felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile matters; provides legal representation to indigent individuals facing conservatorship, guardianship, parental terminations, probate, and Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150 proceedings; performs the duties of the Chief Public Defender in their absence and related duties as assigned.

The Public Defender Division shall function in accordance with Government Code 27700-2771.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is a single position classification allocated to the Public Defender Division. The Assistant Chief Public Defender is responsible for the overall day-to-day administration and management of assigned functions of the department, tries and manages the most complex legal cases, and acts on behalf of the Chief Public Defender in their absence.

This is a discrete classification. The incumbent in this management position serves at the pleasure of their appointing authority, which means the employment relationship is at-will, and that the County of Lake or the employee may terminate the relationship at any time, with or without cause.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general direction from the Chief Public Defender and exercises direct supervision over staff attorneys, professional, technical, administrative support, and extra help employees.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES

Class specifications are intended to present a descriptive list of the scope of duties performed by employees in this class and are not intended to reflect all duties performed within the job.

- Assist in the development and implementation of goals, objectives, policies, procedures and work standards for the Public Defender's Division.
- Oversee the assignment of Court cases, including appellate department matters; makes calendar assignments and ensures all courts are properly staffed.
- Oversee, direct, coordinate, and review the work plan for legal defense staff; assign work activities, projects, and programs; assign and advises subordinates on the conduct of their cases including answering questions of law and departmental and court procedures for the development of trial strategy, meet with staff to identify and resolve problems.
- Assist the Chief Public Defender in hiring, planning, coordinating, assigning and evaluating the work of professional and support staff.
- Oversee orientation, training, professional development, and performance evaluation of staff, recommend and/or administer discipline as required.
- Study, interpret and apply law.

- Personally defend the most complex, sensitive, and high potential cases, and appear in court for other cases or at arraignment to obtain first-hand knowledge of cases going to court.
- Confers with the Public Defender on matters of policy and procedures, and implements decisions; ensures that all prescribed policies and procedures are followed by subordinate supervisory and professional staff, and interprets departmental policies and procedures.
- Appear before various civic, professional, educational and business groups, and represents the Office of the Public Defender on matters relating to the office.
- Consults with Public Defender and the Chief Deputy Public Defenders on various policy and administrative issues.
- Prepare written and/or presents oral reports on various legal, administrative, management and related functions of the department.
- Participate in the preparation of the Division's budget and administer the approved budget and control expenditures.
- Direct procedures to determine eligibility for Public Defender services.
- Serve as a staff defense attorney for court-referred clients by:
 - Interviewing potential clients; advising them of their legal rights, and determining the ineligibility for defense, including potential admission to State mental health facilities.
 - Preparing and conducting a legal defense, from pre-trial through appellate stages.
 - Negotiating with prosecution attorneys for case disposition or modification.
- Evaluate defense services for clients of diverse racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Represent indigent defendants in all phases of the proceedings in all types of cases.
- Discuss public defense cases with judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and similar persons to obtain information and possible action relative to defendants.
- Personally appear in court as defense attorney of major and other cases or at arraignment to obtain first-hand knowledge of cases going to court.
- Act as liaison with other criminal justice agencies and/or public organizations, various County departments, and funding agencies.
- Keep up-to-date on statutory changes affecting the Public Defender Division's programs.
- Speak before civic and professional groups to explain and interpret the Public Defender function; and attend professional meetings and conferences.
- Perform related duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Philosophy and practice of indigent defense, including holistic representation practices.
- Duties, powers, limitations, and responsibilities of indigent defense counsel.
- Advanced principles and applications of civil and criminal law, trial procedure and techniques, conduct of court proceedings, rules of evidence, legal research methods and judicial procedures.
- Handling of capital cases.
- Pertinent federal, state and local laws, codes and regulations.
- Legal counseling and representation
- Principles of supervision, training and performance evaluation.

- Principles of budgeting, fiscal administration, and management.
- Standard legal office practices and procedures and management of a law office.
- Public employment personnel practices including Equal Opportunity Employment, and customer service principles and practices.
- Statistical methods used for management analysis.
- Written and oral communication
- Computer applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook.

Ability to:

- Successfully defend criminal cases.
- Perform legal research.
- Investigate and defend criminal complaints and civil actions.
- Draft legal instruments and opinions.
- Analyze and apply legal principles, facts, evidence, and precedents to complex legal problems and take effective course of action.
- Present law, facts, evidence, and arguments clearly and logically in written and oral form.
- Interpret and apply applicable federal, state, and local policies, laws and regulations.
- Effectively represent the Public Defender Division in legal proceedings and hearings.
- Supervise, guide, counsel and evaluate attorneys in complex areas of law.
- Establish and maintain effective relationships with staff, the legal community, County of Lake officials, community organizations, and other government agencies.
- Communicate effectively both verbally and in written form to present statements of fact, points of law and argument concisely and logically.
- Apply sound administrative judgment to complex organizational, budgetary, regulatory, and personnel problems.
- Demonstrate patience, tact, courtesy and compassion.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Licensing and Certifications:

Possession of, or ability to obtain, an appropriate valid California Driver's License.

Active membership in good standing with the State Bar of California.

Education and Experience:

A Juris Doctorate (J.D.) or Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree from an accredited law school;

AND

Five (5) years of experience as a criminal attorney, four (4) years of which will include intensive trial experience as a public defender; AND 2 (two) years of experience in a supervisory or administrative management capacity.

WORKING CONDITIONS, ADA, AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The County of Lake is an equal opportunity employer and will comply with its obligations under the law to provide equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions.

Incumbents generally work in a typical office environment with adequate light and temperature. There may be occasional exposure to extreme temperatures, loud noise, fumes, noxious odors, dust, mist, gases, and poor ventilation; underground, confined, or restricted workspaces; and heights more than five stories above ground level. Incumbents may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

Sedentary Work: Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required only occasionally and all other sedentary criteria are met.

Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. If the use of arm and/or leg controls requires exertion of forces greater than that for Sedentary Work and the worker sits most of the time, the job is rated for light work.

Positions in this class may require local and statewide travel as necessary.

A successful candidate will be required to submit to and pass a background check prior to the appointment. Depending upon the position and/or assigned department, the background check may include but is not limited to civil and criminal history check, reference check, Live Scan, and/or credit check (as allowed under state law).

Disaster Service Workers: As members of the County of Lake Emergency Services Organization, all Lake County employees are designated as Disaster Service Workers during a proclaimed emergency and may be required to perform certain emergency services at the direction of the department and / or County.

The contents of this class specification shall not be construed to constitute any expressed or implied warranty or guarantee, nor shall it constitute a contract of employment. The County of Lake assumes no responsibility beyond the general accuracy of the document, nor does it assume responsibility for any errors or omissions in the information contained herein. The contents of this specification may be modified or revoked without notice. Terms and conditions of employment are determined through a "meet and confer" process and are subject to the Memorandum of Understanding currently in effect.