

PUBLIC DEFENDER

DEFINITION

Under general policy direction, plans, organizes, administers and coordinates all phases of the work of the Public Defender's office; formulates departmental policies, goals and directives, and performs specialized and complex legal work in connection with significant and complex issues in the defense of public clients.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This class is an at-will position assigned to work in the Placerville office and serving at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. This incumbent is responsible for managing all program and administrative functions of the Public Defender's Office in Placerville and South Lake Tahoe, including budget and personnel issues, as well as maintaining his/her own case load, typically consisting of specialized and/or complex cases.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (Illustrative Only)

- Develops and directs the implementation of goals, objectives, policies, procedures and work standards for the Public Defender's office; ensures consistency of operations between the Placerville and South Lake Tahoe offices; directs the preparation and administration of the department's budget.
- Formulates and recommends policy to the County Administrative Officer and Board of Supervisors, and implements after adoption.
- Plans, organizes, administers, reviews and evaluates the activities of professional and support staff; selects staff and provides for their training and professional development.
- Provides professional and technical advice to attorneys in the office; may defend complex, difficult, sensitive and high penalty cases, from arraignment through the appellate process; may perform trial work including jury selection, examination, cross-examination and arguing the defense case.
- Reviews the sufficiency of cases prepared by staff, including strategy, documentation, alternative approaches and case disposition.
- Prepares and directs the preparation of a variety of periodic and special reports related to the activities and cases defended by the office.
- Interprets County policies and procedures to staff; is responsible for morale, productivity and discipline of department staff.
- Monitors legal developments including legislation and court decisions related to the defense of the public; develops and implements policy and procedural improvements.
- Represents the Public Defender's office and the County in meetings with a variety of public and private groups and individuals.
- Assists and advises County management in cases involving potential criminal prosecution.
- Participates in county planning and department head meetings as requested by the Board and/or the Chief Administrative Officer.

- Participates as a voting member on the Community Corrections Partnership and designate staff to participate in AB109 – Prison Realignment planning meetings.
- Attendance and punctuality that is observant of scheduled hours on a regular basis.
- Performs related work as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles and procedures of criminal law, particularly as related to the defense of court-referred clients.
- Principles, methods, and practices of legal research and investigation.
- Judicial procedures and the rules of evidence.
- Pleadings and practices and effective techniques in the presentation of court cases.
- State and federal laws and constitutional provisions affecting public defense from pre-trial through appeal.
- Administrative management principles and practices including goal setting, budget development and implementation, policy development and implementation, and employee supervision.
- Responsibilities and obligations of public officials and administrative agencies.
- County government organization, structure and functional responsibilities.

Skill in:

- Planning, organizing, directing, administering, reviewing, and evaluating professional, contract and other support staff.
- Selecting, training, motivating and evaluating departmental staff.
- Developing, interpreting and implementing goals, objectives, policies, procedures, work standards and internal controls.
- Analyzing and applying legal principles and precedents, developing defense strategies and making effective court and hearing presentations.
- Performing complex legal research, analyzing complex administrative and legal situations, evaluating alternatives, and making sound recommendations.
- Preparing clear, concise and complete legal documentation and reports, correspondence and other written materials.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work.
- Representing the County effectively in meetings with others.

Other Requirements:

Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license. Must be an active member in good standing of the California State Bar Association.

Education and Experience:

Where college degrees and/or college course credits are required, degrees and college units must be obtained from an accredited college or university. Courses from non-accredited institutions will not be evaluated for this requirement.

Education: Possession of a law degree

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Experience:

Experience as a trial attorney in the State of California, including demonstrated progressively complex experience in the practice of criminal law from arraignments

and trials through the appellate process in complex felony cases, as well experience in the management or supervision of professional and support staff is required. Experience working in a public defender's office is preferred. Pursuant to Government Code Section 27701, must have been a practicing attorney in all of the courts of the State of California for at least the year preceding the date of appointment.

Physical Demands:

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and to move from one building location to another; use standard office equipment including a computer and related computer software and programs; to operate a motor vehicle and drive on surface streets; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator. Positions in this classification bend, reach, and climb stairs. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push and pull materials and objects weighing up to 15 pounds.

Environmental Elements:

Employees are expected to work closely with others inside of buildings and in an office environment. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or members of the public and private representatives.

Working Conditions:

May be required to work various shifts including early mornings and evenings to accommodate projects.