

Chief Appellate Defender

Office of the Appellate Defender

Are you an experienced attorney who is committed to ensuring equal access to justice for impoverished citizens? Do you have a strong supervisory and management background? If so, you could be the next Chief Appellate Defender for the State of Montana. The Office of the Appellate Defender is looking for an experienced manager with a passion for state service and the ability to lead a complex organization. The Chief Appellate Defender works with the Public Defender Commission to manage the Office of the Appellate Defender which represents clients in appeals before the Montana Supreme Court.

Duties:

Management and Supervision – Supervise Appellate Defender staff. Oversee training and a performance evaluation program for attorneys, non-attorney staff members, and contractors. Ensure proper caseload management. Ensure adequate and publically responsible resource allocation. Ensure accurate collection and reporting of caseload data. Provide assistance in resolving conflicts of interest in an appropriate and ethical manner. Manage highly sensitive public, political and agency specific issues.

Policy and Planning – Assist the Public Defender Commission in developing and implementing statewide policies based on short and long-term strategic goals. Monitor and implement the strategic plan approved by the Public Defender Commission that supports both short and long-term goals and objectives. Oversee maintenance of policies, standards, and procedures. Ensure that quality administrative management procedures are in place for the office. Design methods to ensure that eligibility standards are communicated, followed, and maintained.

Communication and Outreach – Represent the Office of the Appellate Defender for the State of Montana. Represent the office on behalf of the Public Defender Commission and the Governor regarding the Appellate Defender System. Actively seek gifts, grants, and donations that may be available through the federal government or other sources to help fund the system. Ensure that appellate defenders, office personnel, and clients are aware of avenues available for bringing forward complaints about appellate defender performance.

Public relations and Legislative Processes – Represent the Public Defender Commission and the Office of the Appellate Defender in the public and private sectors and in particular during legislative sessions and at interim committee hearings. Prepare and present budget information to legislative committees. Study proposed legislation to determine possible effect on matters of interest to the Public Defender Commission and the agency. Recommend legislative changes to the Commission. Confer with legislators and officials to emphasize weaknesses or merits of specific bills to influence passage, defeat, amendment, or introduction of legislation.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Demonstrate an ability to provide strong leadership skills, management experience, and organizational direction
- Demonstrate an ability and understanding of working effectively with a governing board
- Possess strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Have knowledge and experience in public administration, public relations, government organization, lobbying, state budgeting, and legislative processes
- Possess an ability and willingness to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the public, elected officials, defendants, judges, and court personnel
- Possess analytical and problem solving skills
- Ability to energize and lead the Office of the Appellate Defender
- Actively demonstrate a commitment to the state and the mission of Public Defender system
- Ability to build trust and credibility in working relationships
- Have extensive knowledge of the Public Defender/Appellate arena
- Possess knowledge of legal and court policies, procedures, practices, terminology and systems; state and federal laws, rules and regulations; principles and practices of evidence collection; and standards for indigent defense including standards for counsel in capital cases

Education and Experience:

This position requires a Juris Doctorate from an ABA accredited law school. Candidates must be eligible to sit for the Montana Bar Exam although current admission to the Montana Bar is preferred. Applicants should also have at least six years of practical experience in law, preferably in appeals and five years of progressively responsible management and supervisory experience.

Additional Information:

- This position requires a regular presence in the Helena office. However, extensive statewide travel is also required.
- Relocation expenses are not available for this position.
- Pursuant to Montana's open meetings laws, the Public Defender Commission may review and consider application materials in open session. Once application materials are given to the Public Defender Commission, applicant names may be disclosed to the public upon request. For

those applicants selected as finalists, names, and other information about the applicants' backgrounds and qualifications may be disclosed to the public through a press release.

- For further information regarding the Office of the Appellate Defender and the duties of the Chief Appellate Defender, see the Montana Public Defender Act (Title 47, M.C.A.)
- This position is being offered with a salary range of \$65,000 - \$75,000/year, commensurate with experience. In addition, employees new to state government are eligible, on an annual basis, to earn 15 days of vacation, 12 sick days, 10 holidays, as well as full health and dental benefits, life insurance, and retirement. (Current Salary is \$75,000)
- The position closes May 3, 2012. All application materials must be received by midnight on the closing date.