

Vacancy Announcement

Chief Public Defender

Office of the State Public Defender

Are you an experienced litigator 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 Public Defender for the State of Montana. The Office of the State Public Defender is looking for an experienced manager with a passion for state service and the ability to lead a complex organization. The Chief Public Defender works with the Public Defender Commission to manage the statewide Public Defender System which delivers assigned counsel services in State, County, Municipal, and City courts.

Duties:

Management and Supervision – Supervise Regional Public Defenders, the Major Crime Unit Supervisor and Central Office 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 counsel assignments for capital cases are consistent with standards issued by the Montana Supreme Court. Ensure that quality administrative management procedures are in place for each regional office. Design methods to ensure that eligibility standards are communicated, followed, and maintained.

Communication and Outreach – Represent the Office of the State Public Defender for the State of Montana. Represent the office on behalf of the Public Defender Commission and the Governor regarding the Public 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 public defenders, office personnel, and clients are aware of avenues available for bringing forward complaints about public defender performance.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Demonstrated ability to provide strong leadership skills, management experience, and organizational direction.
- Ability and willingness to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the public, elected officials, defendants, witnesses, County and District Court Judges, court personnel, and law enforcement. Strong interpersonal and communication skills.

- Analytical and problem solving skills
- Able to energize and lead the statewide Public Defender System
- Actively demonstrate a commitment to the state and the mission of Public Defender system
- Able to build trust and credibility in working relationships
- Extensive knowledge of Public Defender arena
- Knowledge of legal and court policies, procedures, practices, terminology and systems; state and federal laws, rules and regulations; and principles and practices of evidence collection

Education and Experience:

This position requires a Juris Doctorate from an ABA accredited law school, and admission to the State Bar of Montana. Applicants should also have at least six years of practical experience in law, preferably in litigation of criminal and civil law and five years of progressively responsible management and supervisory experience.

Additional Information:

- This position requires a regular presence in the Butte 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 will be disclosed to the public through a press release.
- For further information regarding the Office of the State Public Defender and the duties of the Chief Public Defender, see the Montana Public Defender Act (Title 47, M.C.A.)