



COUNTY OF HIDALGO

Department of Human Resources

Job Title: **DIRECTOR, PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE**
Grade: 21

The County of Hidalgo Department of Human Resources reserves the right to select candidates considered to be the most highly qualified based on education and experience. The hiring department will interview and select the candidates provided by the Department of Human Resources.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Under policy direction from the County of Hidalgo Commissioners Court, and in coordination with the Executive Officer, directs and administers the operations of the Public Defender's Office.

The incumbent is responsible for leading, managing and administering the programs, functions, budgets, operations and staff of the Public Defender's Office and for participating in the preparation and defense of a variety of criminal and civil matters. The incumbent ensures that assigned programs and operations comply with all applicable laws and regulations, as well as with policies established by the County. The incumbent is expected to model a strong work ethic and leadership skills, including accountability for oneself and others.

EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED

Plans, organizes and directs the programs, functions, budgets, operations, and staff of the Public Defender's Office; directs operations to maximize efficiency, improve service levels, reduce administrative and service provision costs, and ensure effective utilization of available resources; exercises good judgment and makes sound business decisions in managing activities; provides strategic leadership through communication, demonstration, and accomplishment of the organizational mission, vision, and values.

Through subordinate managers and supervisors, manages the work activities and responsibilities assigned to staff; directs and administers personnel matters, including employee selection, assignment, and evaluation; directs disciplinary actions if needed; directs and oversees staff development and training.

Directs the development and administration of the budget for the Public Defender's Office; determines appropriate levels of customer service; analyzes services to ensure cost effectiveness and superior customer service; confers with management staff to develop workload standards and direct operational changes as needed.

Directs staff in preparing cases and representing clients in criminal and civil matters in both court and jury trials and hearings, including criminal defense, parole and post-release supervision violations, juvenile delinquency and dependency, mental health, probate, adoption, civil contempt and termination of parental rights; advises subordinate attorneys in the preparation of cases and defense of clients; serves as resource person for other attorneys.

Directs staff in the most difficult plea bargaining matters; confers with prosecution attorneys, probation authorities, and court officials to discuss pleas, modification of charges, presentation and review of evidence, and other legal matters; participates in mediation hearings to resolve legal problems without further court action.

Directs staff in recommending cases that should be appealed; directs the preparation and presentation of appealed cases.

Attends meetings and conferences and represents the office of the Public Defender; provides information on matters germane to areas of assignment; participates on committees and task forces; develops and maintains cooperative and collaborative working relationships with federal, state and county officials, the courts, community groups and the public; meets and confers with various agents to negotiate effective solutions to difficult problems.

Within the Public Defender's Office, directs and manages the effective development and utilization of technology to improve systems and processes.

Performs related work as assigned.

EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Juris Doctor Degree from an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school

Ten (10) years' experience in criminal litigation, including five (5) years specializing in criminal defense, and five (5) years of experience in a management level capacity

Experience in leading, coordinating, and/or supervising professional staff

Current active membership in the State Bar of Texas required

CERTIFICATES, LICENSES AND REGISTRATION

Must have a current valid Texas Motor Vehicle Operator's License

Must be able to be insured by the County's Insurance carrier

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Knowledge in the principles and practices of criminal and civil law and their application

Knowledge in the principles and practices of public administration, including effective organization, administration, fiscal management, and supervision

Knowledge in judicial procedures and the rules of evidence

Knowledge in principles, methods, materials and practices of legal research

Skill in the use of a computer and applicable software

Skill in identifying and solving complex problems

Skill in prioritizing workloads

Skill in using judgment to identify courses of action.

Ability to plan and direct the operations and programs associated with a public agency criminal defense office in a cost-effective manner while also ensuring excellent customer service

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work, including other County departments, courts, external agencies, employees, and the general public

Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing

Ability to exercise analytical and critical thinking to analyze complex factual legal problems and recommend solutions

Employee may be assigned other duties in addition to those listed; duties may change according to the changing needs of the County

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee frequently is required to stand. The employee is occasionally required to walk; sit; use hands to find, handle, or feel objects, tools or controls; reach with hands and arms; climb or balance; stoop and kneel.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move over twenty-five (25) pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounter while performing the essential functions of this job.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Maintain physical conditions appropriate to the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities which may include the following:

- sitting for extended periods of time
- standing for extended periods of time
- operating assigned equipment

Maintain mental capacity which permits:

- making sound decisions and using good judgment
- demonstrating intellectual capabilities

Effectively handle a work environment and conditions which involve:

- working closely with others
- working in a multi-task environment

Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for:

- making observations
- reading and writing
- operating assigned equipment

- communication with others
- required to follow the County of Hidalgo Accident Prevention Plan and department's safety regulations