



Position: Chief Public Defender

SALARY: \$122,928
DEPARTMENT: Public Defender
OPENING DATE: Immediately
CLOSING DATE:

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Under the direction and supervision of the County Administrator (s), the Public Defender serves as the attorney of record of all indigent adults in criminal cases ensuring that Benzie/Manistee County meets all constitutional and legislative requirements as they pertain to the representation of indigent adult offenders. The Public Defender is responsible for development, implementation, oversight and direction of the Public Defender Office and the indigent defense private counsel conflict/overflow list. This includes staffing, training supervising, counseling, disciplining the office, and maintaining full compliance of the State of Michigan/LARA requirements.

This is a full-time, benefited position that requires frequent travel throughout Manistee and Benzie County. The position will be open until filled and the start date of the position is **contingent on the continuance of funding.**

BENEFITS:

- Hybrid pension plan which includes a Defined Benefit & Defined Contribution
- Comprehensive Medical, Pharmacy & Dental
- Short-term Disability and Basic Life & AD&D insurance
- Optional Voluntary 457 Deferred Compensation plan, VSP, AFLAC & Life Insurance
- Health & Dependent Flexible Spending Accounts
- Paid Vacation and Personal Time & 13 Holidays
- Vacation rollover and PR payout within Policy Guidelines

ESSENTIAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES/FUNCTIONS:

- Supervise and administer the Public Defender Office including: staffing, training and supervising staff; implements and monitors indigent defense private counsel/overflow contract; develops and implements policies and procedures as proposed by the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission and approved by the Supreme Court.
- Represents clients in court proceedings, interviews law enforcement personnel, witnesses, corrections, officers, etc. Engages in negotiations with the Prosecutor and clients; prepares correspondence and legal documents; gathers and reviews case evidence, conducts research and reviews evidence, exhibits, reports, statements, etc.; conducts all aspects of criminal representation including appearing and arguing in court for arraignments, preliminary hearings, pre-trial motions, and trial.
- Assigns cases to Chief Assistant and Assistant Public Defenders and private counsel. Directs Chief Assistant and Assistant Public Defenders in gathering and analyzing evidence, preparing arguments, filing necessary documents, and presenting cases in court. Consults and recommends course of formal legal defense as appropriate and regularly monitors cases in progress, makes departmental decisions on major courses of action & plea-bargaining conditions.
- Resolves client/staff conflicts arranging replacement counsel as appropriate.
- Directs and/or performs the department's administrative functions and prepares the annual MIDC compliance application and budget. Prepares and submits the required quarterly grant compliance reports.
- Utilize county resources efficiently and effectively to provide a high level of indigent defense services; ensures that legal representation of each client continues in other courts, legal proceedings arising from the same case and programs as requested by the court and that once assigned, attorney continues to represent each client through to completion of the proceedings unless a reassignment is necessary.
- Verify that each private counsel used for overflow has adequate liability insurance; that is maintained and that the county and court are held harmless from liability arising from their representation of a client.
- Monitors legal developments, including legislation and court decisions which may impact the work of the Department; ensure that legal staff is kept up to date on such developments.
- Develops and implements programs to assess, meet or exceed mandated standards adopted as a requirement by the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission, the American Bar Association, and the State Bar of Michigan for competent legal defense services.
- Develop internal case load management, attend meetings and conferences with other agencies and departments as required.
- Attend meetings, conferences, and continuing legal education opportunities as approved by the County Administrator and monitors private counsel participation in continuing legal education events.
- Perform other administrative duties as required by the County Administrator.

REQUIRED EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE:

Education: This position requires a Juris Doctorate Degree with a Certificate of Admittance to the State Bar of Michigan as evidence of continued good standing and the authority to practice law through the State of Michigan. Desired experience would also include a Master of Public Administration or Master of Businesses Administration.

Experience: A minimum of five (5) years of experience in the practice of criminal law, with no fewer than seven (7) felony jury trials that have been submitted to the jury or a significant record of consistently high-quality criminal trial court representation and ability to handle a life offense case. Desired experience would also include running and managing an office for at least 5 years.

Physical: Must be able to perform essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodations, including, but not limited to, visual and/or audiological appliances and devices to increase mobility. Work is generally performed in a normal office and court environment with travel through Manistee and Benzie County.

Other: Must have the ability to operation technology to search, update, correct and retrieve information. Must successfully pass a pre-employment background check. Must maintain regular, reliable, and predictable attendance. Possession of a valid driver's license and access to a vehicle required.

Benzie and Manistee Counties are Equal Opportunity Employers.

To apply:

Mail cover letter, resume and credentials to Manistee County, Julie Griffis, HR Manager at 415 Third Street, Manistee, MI 49660 or email to jgriffis@manisteecountymi.gov.