

The ensuing Chief Public Defender Job Description was created, drafted and approved by the Indiana Chief Defenders Association as a guideline for Chief Public Defenders. Although not mandated, this Job Description essentially sets forth best practices for Chief Public Defenders to follow.

## **INDIANA COUNTY CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER**

Preface: It is understood that this job description is only a guideline to give guidance to Chief Public Defenders. It is recognized that each public defender office is unique in this state and each will operate differently to best serve their clients and courts. Since the size of counties in this state vary greatly and the courts do not all run uniformly, there has to be variances in the application of these guidelines in the counties throughout this state.

### **General Summary**

A chief public defender is the chief executive officer of a county public defender agency. Chief public defenders are responsible for the overall management of a county agency, including daily administration, personnel, training, caseload management, ethics, and quality control of all areas necessary to secure high quality representation for clients appointed to the agency. The Chief Public Defender shall be hired by and report directly and solely to the public defender board of the county.

### **Primary Responsibilities**

1. The Chief Public Defender hires, administers, and directs all public defense staff, employees, contractors, and assigned counsel consistent with IC 33-40-7-7, Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Professional Conduct, and ABA Formal Opinion 06-441 and comprehensive plan of the county.
2. The Chief Public Defender prepares and submits the agency's annual budget and supplemental budget requests. A Chief Public Defender shall manage the agency's budget and financial resources efficiently and effectively to provide high quality public defense representation to all clients.
3. The Chief Public Defender shall develop and implement policies and procedures for the county public defender agency to comply with the standards and guidelines of the Indiana Public Defender Commission. The Chief Public Defender shall take the necessary steps to insure that the county public defender agency submits quarterly requests for reimbursement of eligible expenses of the county public defender agency to Indiana Public Defender Commission for deposit to the County Auditor's office.
4. The Chief Public Defender shall serve as the agency's liaison to county justice agencies and appropriate county boards and commissions.

### **Essential Qualifications**

Education: Juris Doctor degree and admitted to practice law in Indiana.

Experience: Five years of criminal law experience.

### **Other Qualifications**

A chief public defender should be an attorney who has professional, management, leadership, trial, appellate, and negotiation skills to lead by setting a professional example. The person selected should:

- Be committed to public defense and the principles that underlie the effective assistance of counsel, including equal protection and due process;
- Have an understanding of the ABA Criminal Justice Standards for the Defense Function (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.), the National Association of Public Defense Foundational Principles, the Standards and Guidelines of the Indiana Public Defender Commission, and the Performance Standards of the Indiana Public Defender Council;
- a comprehensive understanding of how to find and research federal and state statutes and state and local rules relating to the defense of indigent clients;
- Have an understanding of client-centered representation principles and the values, structures and processes necessary to implement those principles in a public defender office;
- Have a vision for what the office should achieve consistent with the provision of high-quality representation;
- Have an appropriate philosophy and the skills to ensure that the work is done in a highly professional and ethical manner;
- Have knowledge of budgets and the county budgetary process;
- Have the requisite interpersonal and communicative skills to navigate discussion with the county commissioners, county council, judges of the various courts of the county, and appointed clients.
- Be an effective communicator internally with the ability and willingness to communicate values, vision, and day-to-day issues effectively, with both part time and full time staff.
- Ensure that all staff are educated, trained and mentored as professionals and leaders;
- Be committed to diversity, including recruiting a diverse work force, if possible; and
- Be committed to maintaining the professional independence of the office.