

VANDERBURGH COUNTY CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

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 ensure that the county public defender agency submits quarterly request 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 the 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 (4th 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.

The Chief Public Defender salary for 2026 is \$188,513. The compensation also includes a generous benefits package, including an excellent insurance plan, and PERF contributions.

Interested applicants should SEND a resume, cover letter, and references to Brian P. Williams, Chair Public Defender Commission at P.O. Box 3646 Evansville IN 47735-3646.

Application deadline: Will remain open through October 2, 2026.