Title: Chief Public Defender

FLSA Status: Exempt

Department: Public Defender

Pay Band: SO

Supervisor: Hendricks County Public Defender Board

PURPOSE OF POSITION:

To perform this position successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed in this document are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Hendricks County provides reasonable accommodation to qualified employees and applicants with known disabilities who require accommodation to complete the application process or perform essential functions of the job, unless the accommodation would cause an undue hardship.

Incumbent serves as Chief Public Defender for the Hendricks County Public Defender’s Office, responsible for overseeing department operations and providing proper legal representation and services to individuals as assigned by the Court and required by statute.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Oversees general operations of the Public Defender’s Office, including monitoring case assignments and caseloads, developing and implementing effective policies, practices, and procedures, and providing assistance to Public Defenders as needed to assure proper and effective Public Defender services for Hendricks County residents.
- Supervises staff, including communicating/administering personnel programs, providing orientation and training, coordinating work assignments, establishing goals/standards, evaluating job performance, maintaining discipline, and informing staff of organizational development.
- Periodically, analyzes human resources needs and recommends increases/decreases in staff, interviews and hires job candidates, and reviews position responsibilities. Updates and assures proper maintenance of department personnel files.
- Represents persons charged with major felony and juvenile offenses in Hendricks County. Serves as main trial attorney and litigator on all major cases.
- Meets and communicates with clients to discuss cases; schedules appointments in office, jail, or courthouse; and conferences with multiple parties, including Prosecutor, other counsel, experts, Probation Officers, and other interested parties.
- Prepares for hearings by sending subpoenas, preparing exhibits, viewing evidence, gathering pertinent information, preparing questions and arguments, determining trial strategy, and preparing defendants and/or witnesses for trial. Presents and argues cases before the Court.
• Conducts factual and legal research as required to prepare for cases, including interviewing witnesses and clients, taking depositions, investigating allegations and evidence, and reviewing previous pleadings and discovery motions.
• Assesses cases and negotiates plea bargains with Prosecutor when appropriate, assuring best possible conditions for clients and satisfaction of their needs.
• Drafts motions, petitions, pleadings, legal memorandums and briefs, including briefs submitted to both the Indiana Appellate and Supreme Courts. Prepares a wide variety of correspondence, court documents, and letters to clients, the Court, prosecutors, and/or witnesses.
• Assists in developing alternative sentencing programs and monitors rehabilitation programs.
• Meets with Judges concerning court procedures and Public Defenders’ performance.
• Investigates and responds to complaints regarding attorneys and public inquiries of agency.
• Maintains list of qualified attorneys to handle conflict cases; appoints, assign, and monitors conflict attorneys.
• Represents the Office of the Public Defender for a variety of purposes, including meetings with County Council and Commissioners, County Attorney, Jail Commander, Chief Probation Officer, County Auditor, Public Defender Commission, other government and community officials, and public speaking engagements and presentations to news media. Serves on various boards and committees as requested or otherwise decided.
• Lobbies state legislators concerning state funding. Prepares state reimbursement requests. Assures proper preparation, submission, and administration of annual Department budget. Completes annual reports on Department operations as required. Prepares and submits Department budget for budget hearings.
• Continually researches changes and new developments in criminal and civil law, and legal procedures.
• Attends conferences, seminars, workshops, and related professional education and development programs.

NON-ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

• Occasional responds to emergencies on a 24-hour basis.
• Performs related duties as assigned.

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

• Doctor Jurisprudence with license to practice laws in the State of Indiana. Must be an active member in good standing with the Indiana Bar Association.
• Complete knowledge of and ability to apply federal, state, and local laws and ordinances to a wide variety of individual situations and circumstances for the preparation of cases and defense of clients before the court and/or jury.
• Complete knowledge of standard legal procedures and practices of Hendricks County Court, with ability to effectively prepare and argue cases before the court and/or jury.
 Complete knowledge of Public Defender’s Office goals, objectives, and operational requirements, with ability to effectively develop and implement appropriate procedures accordingly.

Knowledge of financial/accounting systems used by Hendricks County and other regulating/auditing agencies, with ability to develop and/or revise appropriate procedures, prepare/administer budgets, and accurately complete financial/statistical reports and documents as required.

Working knowledge of standard office procedures and computer software programs used by the Public Defender’s Office, with ability to apply such knowledge to a variety of interrelated processes, tasks, and operations.

Working knowledge of standard English grammar, spelling and punctuation, and ability to prepare court/legal documents and written reports, maintain accurate and organized files, and make public speaking presentations.

Ability to effectively supervise and delegate duties and responsibilities to Department personnel.

Ability to properly operate standard office equipment, such as computer, calculator, transcriber/Dictaphone, copier, fax machine, telephone, and scanner.

Ability and willingness to effectively and fairly represent clients amidst potential controversy, unpopularity, and lack of support from member of the general public.

Ability to conduct legal research and interview and/or investigate clients, witnesses, crime scenes, and other persons/areas as individual cases demand.

Ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing with co-workers, other County departments, Courts, Prosecutor’s Office, Auditor, Clerk, Human Resources, IT and the public including being sensitive to professional ethics, gender, cultural diversities, and disabilities.

Ability to provide public access to or maintain confidentiality of department information and records according to state requirements.

Ability to comply with all employer and department policies and work rules, including, but not limited to attendance, safety, drug-free workplace, and personal conduct.

Ability to competently serve the public with diplomacy and respect, including occasional encounters with irate/hostile persons.

Ability to compare, compile, analyze and evaluate data, make determinations, and take action based on data analysis.

Ability to understand, memorizes, retain and follow oral written instructions and present findings in oral and written form.

Ability to work independently, with others in a team environment, and as a member of a committee, often amidst frequent distractions and interruptions, and under pressure from formal schedules, deadlines, and high volume operations.

Ability to define problems precisely, identify and combines relevant facts objectively and in perspective, and develop or produce new concepts, techniques, or programs through imagination or innovation.

Ability to organize diverse work assignments, plan/coordinate activities of subordinates, and maintain constructive relationships.

Ability to regularly work extended hours, evenings and/or weekends, and occasionally travels out of town for seminars/conferences/investigations, sometimes overnight.
• Ability to occasionally respond to emergencies on a 24-hour basis.
• Possession of a valid Indiana driver’s license and demonstrated safe driving record.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Incumbent applies a broad scope of rules and regulations in overseeing department operations and supervising personnel. Incumbent exercises independent judgment in developing effective approaches for representing clients and presenting cases before the court and/or jury and in adapting basic guidelines and accepted procedures to meet specific situations and fix complex or contradictory circumstances.

Incumbent makes major contributions to the administration and implementation of department policies and legal actions. Objectives of incumbent’s work are known, with highly sensitive and/or unusual cases discussed with the Public Defender Board and/or professional peers as needed. Work is reviewed primarily for soundness of judgment, attainment of objectives, and compliance with applicable practices, policies, and legal requirements. Incumbent regularly makes decisions in the absence of policy and is subject only to guidance from administrative boards.

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS:

Incumbent maintains frequent contact with co-workers, other County departments, Prosecutor’s Office, Auditor, Clerk, Human Resources, IT, and the public for purposes of administering department operations, preparing and arguing cases before the court, negotiating plea agreements, and resolving various problems. Incumbent reports directly to the Hendricks County Public Defender Board.

WORKING CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Incumbent performs duties in a standard office environment and in a courtroom, involving sitting for long periods, sitting and walking at will, reaching, bending, lifting/carrying objects weighing less than 25 pounds, keyboarding, close/far vision, depth perception, hearing sounds/communication, speaking clearly, and handling/grasping/fingering objects. Incumbent maintains considerable contact with the public and may be exposed to hostile/argumentative individuals and/or physical violence. Incumbent regularly works extended hours, evenings and/or weekends, and occasionally travels out of town for conferences/seminars/investigations, sometimes overnight. Incumbent occasionally responds to emergencies on a 24-hour basis.

APPLICANT/EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The job description for the position of Chief Public Defender in the Public Defenders Department describes the duties and responsibilities in this position. I acknowledge that I have received this job description, and understand that it is not a contract of employment. I am responsible for reading this job description and complying with all job duties, requirements and responsibilities contained herein, and any subsequent revisions.
Is there anything that would keep you from meeting the job duties and requirements as outlined?

Yes_____   No______

_________________________________________                  ______________________
Applicant/Employee signature                                                    Date

__________________________________________
Printed Name