



## CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Code: 9311  
Date Est: 10/1973  
Last Rev: 04/2018  
Last Title Chg:  
FLSA: exempt

### PUBLIC DEFENDER

#### **DEFINITION**

Under general administrative direction, plans, organizes and directs the actions of the Public Defender's Office, including evaluation of legal complexities concerning cases and defense of indigent defendants in court; and performs related work as required.

#### **EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

Graduation from a recognized law school AND five years of full-time experience in the practice of law with a focus on criminal defense or two years of full-time experience as a Deputy Public Defender IV in Washoe County; OR an equivalent combination of education and experience.

#### **LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE**

Current membership in the Nevada State Bar is required at the time of appointment.

Qualification under Nevada Supreme Court Rule 250 to act as lead counsel in a capital case is preferred.

A valid driver's license is required at the time of appointment.

#### **SUPERVISION EXERCISED**

Exercises direct supervision over professional and support staff.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES** *(The following is used as a partial description and is not restrictive as to duties required.)*

Direct, organize, plan, coordinate and manage the functions, staff and services of the Public Defender's Office.

Develop systems, policies and practices for the Public Defender's Office to achieve established goals and maximize efficiency.

Administer, supervise and perform the investigation and preparation of the defense in cases where the Public Defender's Office has been appointed legal counsel.

Negotiate with, or direct staff to negotiate with, the office of the District Attorney and other agencies.

Supervise staff including training, scheduling, work assign and review, performance appraisal, discipline, coaching and development; develop performance standards and review and amend work methods and procedures as necessary to enhance efficiency and efficacy.

Prepare, manage and submit the Public Defender's Office budget and annual report.

Analyze and review staff briefs, strategies and legal opinions.

Represent the Public Defender's Office by explaining policies and goals to the public, elected officials and other governmental agencies.

Serve as a liaison between the Public Defender's Office and other County departments, the media, the public and law enforcement agencies.

Serve on county, statewide or national committees, councils or groups, as required.

Guide trial work for professional legal staff.

Analyze staff opinions and briefs on legal issues and defenses for suggested revisions and advice.

Review criminal complaints and analyze for the propriety of charge(s).

Coordinate investigations and interviewing of witnesses.

Analyze the facts of a case and legal precedents for preliminary hearing motions, stipulations or waivers.

Conduct preliminary hearings for defense.

Analyze preliminary hearing or grand jury transcripts for pre-arraignment writ or motion presentations.

Interpret and apply law, court decisions and other legal authorities in the preparation of cases and briefs.

Supervise and manage the assembly of evidence and legal materials for trial purposes and/or discussion of settlements with prosecutors.

Conduct jury trials.

Manage and prepare pleadings and other legal documents in connection with suits, trials, hearings, conservatorships and other legal proceedings.

Supervise and prepare appellate cases including briefings and oral arguments before appellate courts.

Coordinate legal work with the District Attorney's office and other law enforcement agencies without impairing the defense.

Supervise, meet with, and discuss cases with clients and their families.

May represent parties in termination of parental rights cases and guardianships/probation revocations, including discussing settlements with prosecutors and social workers.

Perform the most complex legal representation and casework as assigned.

Ensure that assigned personnel perform duties and responsibilities in a safe and prudent manner that does not expose them or others to unnecessary harm or risk of on-the-job injury.

## **JOB RELATED AND ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

**Full Performance** *(These may be acquired on the job and are needed to perform the work assigned.)*

### **Knowledge of:**

Principles of management and public administration.

Departmental/division policies and procedures.

Countywide personnel policies.

State and local laws, codes and regulations applicable to the Public Defender's Office.

Washoe County budget process and pertinent policies and procedures of other County offices (i.e., Budget, Risk Management, Human Resources, District Attorney).

Computer software specific to the department, or an equivalent case management system.

**Ability to:**

Select, supervise and evaluate the performance of assigned staff.

Plan, monitor, coordinate and direct the full scope of operations of the Public Defender's Office.

Be responsible for the most complex and difficult legal representation work in the Public Defender's Office with considerable independence and decision-making latitude.

Develop effective work teams and motivate individual to meet goals and objectives.

**Entry Level** (*Applicants will be screened for possession of these through written, oral, performance, or other methods and techniques.*)

**Knowledge of:**

Principles and practices of supervision.

Comprehensive knowledge of Criminal and Civil practice of law and associated procedures.

The Penal Code and other Nevada statutes and their application to Criminal and Civil law.

Judicial procedures and the rules of evidence.

The principles of Criminal, Constitutional and Administrative Law.

Legal research methods and available computer programs for legal research.

Principles of budget preparation and fiscal accounting.

**Ability to:**

Interpret, understand and apply technical reports, statutes, rules and regulations.

Perform legal research and analysis, developing legal issues and presenting clear and logical arguments and statements of fact and law.

Evaluate work priorities and processes to determine their effectiveness and efficiency.

Develop and administer the Public Defender's Office budget.

Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

Evaluate complex cases and interrupt legal proceedings and precedent, develop sound conclusions and make effective decisions and/or recommendations.

Exercise initiative, independent judgment and discretion.

Maintain cooperative working relationships with other management staff, elected officials, the general public and representatives of other departments.

Make presentations and effectively represent the Public Defender's Office in contacts with the public, community organizations, law enforcement agencies and other government jurisdictions.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS** *(Essential duties require the following physical skills and work environment.)*

Ability to work in a standard office environment. Ability to lift and move objects weighing up to 25 lbs. Work is performed in office, outdoors and courtroom environments.

*This class specification is used for classification, recruitment and examination purposes. It is not to be considered a substitute for work performance standards.*