



Lemanu P.S. Mauga
Governor

David Vargas
Acting Public Defender

Talauega E. V. Ale
Lt. Governor

Office of the Public Defender

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POSITION DESCRIPTION – PUBLIC DEFENDER

General Description

Seeking a Public Defender (PD) to provide legal representation to indigent defendants in criminal felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and certain proceedings as appointed by the Court. Our office employs five (5) attorneys and five (5) support staff to assist with a multitude of cases we handle each year. We are putting together a team of diverse and outstanding individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds who are able to provide high quality representation to our clients.

Position Type

Full time, must have five (5) or more years as a Public Defender or criminal defense experience with extensive court appearance and litigation experience. Additionally, must have skill and experience in office administration to include supervision of staff as well as development and monitoring of departmental budget.

Key Duties & Responsibilities

Public Defender is accountable for providing high quality representation to clients.

Responsibilities include:

- Supervising and administering the Office of the Public Defender;
- Supervises assigned professional and clerical staff;
- Prepares budget for the operation of the office;
- Must be able to secure the services of experts in various fields to assist in representing indigents;
- Assigns attorneys for each indigent person;
- Determines who is eligible for representation by the Office of the Public Defender and reviews for conflict of interest;
- Preparing each case efficiently and expeditiously;
- Advising and counseling each client;
- Establishing and maintaining a professional relationship with each client;
- Effective and efficient use of investigators, mitigation and placement specialists and other support staff;
- Seeking assistance from experts appropriate to the case;
- Demonstrating professional demeanor;
- Exercising sound judgement to achieve desired results; and

Minimum Requirements

- Minimum of ten (10) years of criminal law practice

- Licensed to practice law in any U.S. State or Territory – American Samoa does not administer a bar exam – a law license in good standing in any U.S. jurisdiction is sufficient for local admission.
- Possess the ability to lead, manage, and effectively administer a defender’s office and demonstrated commitment to maintaining an ethical and civil workplace environment
- Possess a commitment to supporting a diverse workforce creating fair and equal opportunities for employees to succeed
- Possess a verifiable reputation for integrity and good character, a commitment to equal justice under the law and vigorous representation of those unable to afford counsel and outstanding legal ability and competence.
- Excellent verbal, computer, and communication skills;
- Demonstrated ability to write clearly and concisely;
- Bilingual skills: English/Tagalog and/or English/Vietnamese helpful but not required;
- Willingness to interview clients in jails and in juvenile detention facilities; and
- Valid Driver’s License;

Employment Status

Contractor – Minimum two (2) year term.

Salary & Benefits

- \$75,000 per annum
- Monthly Housing Allowance
- Bonus upon completion of two (2) year term
- Assigned Office Vehicle
- Travel allowance for yourself and your dependents
- Household shipping allowance
- 26 days paid leave per annum
- 13 days paid sick leave per annum
- Medical & Dental benefits for employee and dependents through Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center or the American Samoa Department of Health (you are responsible for co-pays and nominal facility charges).

Application Process

The application forms and further instructions are available at www.americansamoa.gov/jobs. A scanned PDF copy of the completed and signed application must be emailed to secretaryofamericansamoa@go.as.gov. All of the following must be included as well:

- Law school transcripts;
- Copy of law school diploma;
- State bar certifications of good standing;

- Letters of Reference (letters of reference not included with application will not be considered);

All forms and required documents must be submitted no later than October 1, 2022. Once a hiring determination is finalized, additional instructions will be provided.