

Iowa Department of Administrative Services – Human Resources Enterprise
Job Classification Description

Public Defender Fellow

Definition

Completes a fellowship program within the Office of the State Public Defender, as set forth by Iowa Code Section 13B.12; performs entry-level professional legal work representing indigent clients and juveniles in cases where the local Public Defender has been appointed as counsel; performs related work as required.

The work examples and competencies listed below are for illustrative purposes only and not intended to be the primary basis for position classification decisions.

Work Examples

Participates in the investigation and preparation of a defense for assigned cases to obtain facts in determining the merits of cases and appropriate courses of action.

Prepares drafts of pleadings, motions, supporting affidavits, letters, and briefs.

Advocates in assigned cases at every stage of the criminal justice system through resolution in the pre-trial process, plea bargaining process, trial, verdict, and sentencing by providing legal counsel and advice, interviewing and selecting appropriate witnesses, preparing witnesses to give testimony, presenting argument in court, and conducting direct and cross examination of witnesses.

Negotiates plea bargains, dismissals, or other dispositions of assigned cases with prosecuting attorneys or other interested parties.

Competencies Required

Knowledge:

- Law and Government – Laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
- English Language – The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Customer Service – Principles and processes for providing customer services, including customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluating customer satisfaction.

Abilities:

- Oral Expression – Communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Oral Comprehension – Listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- Written Expression – Communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.
- Written Comprehension – Read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.

- Speech Clarity – Speak clearly so others can understand.
- Deductive Reasoning – Apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- Inductive Reasoning – Combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions.

Skills:

- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- Critical Thinking – Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- Complex Problem Solving – Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
- Writing – Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- Negotiation – Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.
- Persuasion – Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
- Active Learning – Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

Minimum Qualification Requirements

Applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and possess a current license to practice law in the State of Iowa prior to commencing employment in positions in this job classification.

Notes

Positions in this class are exempt from the screening and referral requirements of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services – Human Resources Enterprise. Apply directly to the State Public Defender.

Effective date: 06/14 SA