

**Washington County**  
*Job Description*

**JOB TITLE: Investigator, Court & Trial Coordinator**

---

**Exempt (Y/N):** Yes

**Date Prepared:** April 2016

**Department:** Office of the Public Defender

**Supervisor:** Public Defender

---

The Office of the Public Defender provides zealous and effective assistance to indigent persons charged with crimes, ensuring that clients receive the essential representation as provided by statute and the Constitution. Our office takes great pride in providing a consistent level of high service.

**General Description of Position:**

This position exists to perform independent investigations of criminal charges, for juveniles and adults that are filed against individuals in which the Public Defender's Office has been appointed to represent. The incumbent provides sophisticated investigatory expertise for a wide range of complex, sensitive, and difficult cases that have significant legal implications that have been assigned to the Public Defender's Office where criminal action is involved or suspected. This person is responsible for providing skilled investigative work as well as coordinating all aspects of trial preparation and presentation of defense evidence and testimony for trial. This includes providing their professional opinion and offering legal assistance on both the guilt and penalty of various types of cases. This position requires a highly motivated individual who can contribute innovative ideas, as well as implementing them into the office's organization for a more efficient operation with a belief in due process of law and a strong desire to help the indigent to ensure that they receive proper representation during the judicial process.

This person is responsible for ensuring that each situation is handled accordingly as seen fit by the appointed attorney to be objective and discover the truth of each case.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** include the following:

1. Independently conduct complex and sensitive investigations to formulate logical conclusions and provide sound recommendations to support the legal defense of a full variety of criminal cases.
2. Evaluate various types of evidence and advise attorneys in investigative procedures and techniques, physical evidence matters, information sources, and determine the importance and relevance of the evidence investigations.
3. Locate and serve subpoenas for court appearances of defense witnesses. Analyze statements and presents findings and evaluations to the attorneys on the reliability and credibility of witnesses; help prepare witness testimony.
4. Conduct meetings with attorneys to identify potential witnesses and interview those witnesses.
5. Collaborate with death penalty teams.
6. Act as a trusted advisor reviewing police dispatch tapes to determine pertinent and relevant case information and other media evidence for trial. Review investigative findings for attorneys and their clients.

7. Prepare and provide oral and written reports regarding investigation performed. as well as being able to interpret their meaning in relation to the evidence, with the capability to explain the significance of the evidence, with little information or wrong information.
8. Testify in court regarding facts established by investigations.
9. Arrange travel and lodging needs for the office, including witnesses and experts. Facilitate appointments with the crime lab and medical examiners' office to schedule lab personnel for trial dates and hearings. Oversee expert witness via closed circuit television as judges will allow. Obtain media evidence from medical examiner's office along with autopsy photos as part of a case's discovery as well as conducting investigations. Handle all media for both jury trials and trainings.
10. Prepare legal documents with accuracy including the ability to draft motions and orders no supervision. Reads and comprehends instructions, correspondence, and memoranda, reports and other documents associated with this position.
11. Actively participates in the budgetary process and is responsible for various office expenditures and is accountable for VISA Purchasing card (P-Card) and/or any other cards with purchasing power. Works with other county offices to ensure cost-effective measures regarding office expenses. Reconciles monthly P-card statements.
12. Perform any legal research requested by the Public Defender or Deputy Public Defenders using all available resources via internet searches and electronic libraries, including but not limited to search for records; interview people to gather information.
13. Organize and transport civilian clothing for incarcerated clients for trials/hearings.
14. Educates Hispanic victims on the process of pursuing criminal charges and what to expect once a complaint/arrest has been made. Remain available to victims and their families for crisis intervention support. Notify Hispanic victims of status of a client's case of court dates, motions, attorney meetings, plea offers, mental evaluations, dispositions. Develop a variety of community contacts.
15. Serve as the office representative for Arkansas Continuity of Operations Program to implement an office emergency plan as a result from attending meetings.
16. Responsible for keeping track of all special equipment within the office including.
17. Be a team player who contributes to a team atmosphere to accomplish the desired results, and provide assistance to other office staff and perform miscellaneous duties as assigned.
18. Ensure all duties assigned are performed in a proficient, timely and responsible manner to provide office continuity in accordance with the law to protect the individual rights all citizens in Washington County.
19. Resolve problems with a courteous and helpful attitude, treating all people with courtesy and respect in a professional and ethical manner consistent to office policy and procedures the standards set by Washington County.

**Qualifications:** *To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

**Education and Experience:**

A Bachelor Degree from an accredited four-year educational institution is required for this position; a degree in social science is preferred. Six (6) years of secretarial type experience in general office skills, setting and functionality with five (5) or more years of clerical experience in a legal office, drafting motions, with an investigative emphasis and 12 to 18 months or more of management experience.

It is preferred if the incumbent speaks fluent Spanish and able to translate and provide service to individuals with limited English proficiency while providing interpretation and/or translation when necessary to schedule appointments between Spanish speaking clients when language barriers exist.

**Required Certificates, Licenses, Registrations:**

Must obtain Criminal Defense Investigator Certification after a minimum of 2 years of being employed for the state public defender's office, and maintain credentials and membership with investigator associations.

Incumbents are required to drive to visit and investigate crime scenes whereas a valid driver's license is required at the time of application, and must be maintained. Unaccompanied independent travel is required, including difficult-to-reach locations and/or under varied weather conditions.

Must have the ability to become a notary.

**Knowledge of:**

A good understanding and working knowledge of criminal law including the rules of arrest, search and seizure, subpoena services, rules of evidence, regulations regarding adults and juveniles, laws, regulations, and courtroom procedures in felony, misdemeanor, and courtroom and jury trial matters; including legal terminology, with a clear understanding of the professional ethics and confidentiality.

Principles of criminal investigations including gathering, preserving, presenting evidence, basic identification techniques and methods of operation; and basic psychological principles, interview techniques, and interrogating witnesses of varied socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, including mentally deficient clients.

Techniques employed in diagramming and demonstrating evidence to be presented in court; remain current on technology and trends in the profession.

Knowledge of the all of the above mentioned is the minimum for this job and the learning time on the job to be acquainted with the job duties of this position, internal workings of the court system, internal County departments, and outside agencies that has a considerable impact on the organization's end results will vary upon the incumbent and is expected to take 7-11 months to become familiar with management requirements of the job.

**Initiative & Ingenuity:*****Supervision Received:***

Works independently on multiple tasks and cases, receiving nominal direction regarding work responsibilities. Acts under the general direction of the Public Defender; Arranges and monitors own work product to ensure quality thus creating own standard of performance.

***Planning:***

Considerable amount of responsibility with regard to general assignments in planning requirements, method, manner, prioritizing, and/or sequence of performance of own work and the delegation of other coworkers, requiring to be a self-starter with good initiative, detail oriented, and highly organized.

***Decision-Making:***

Performs work duties which allows for frequent opportunity for decision-making of major importance which would have a considerable effect on the reflection and end result on the department, employees, clientele, public image, financial management, health, and safety to a very high degree.

**Mental Demand:**

Job demands of this position require a high level of concentration and sensory alertness, and considers both intensity and frequency of job tasks to complete work assignments. Considers visual and auditory concentration and strain, given the context of the nature of the information or data being processed for a high volume of criminal cases that require a significant amount of vigilance and attentiveness.

Understands and considers the time pressure to complete tasks and is not always in control over their own work pace with tight time pressures to finish specific job tasks with the need for precision and detail is very high, factoring in the complexity, organizing, planning and prioritizing in a professional manner to handle situations in a high stress environment with high consideration of the reflection of department.

Considers the degree of analysis to handle grisly and disturbing images, videos, letters and/or other types of evidence, including but not limited to homicides, manslaughter, murder, cases of a sexual nature, aggravated assault, armed robberies, home invasions, and property crimes.

**Analytical Ability/Problem Solving:**

Work requires a high degree of analytical and deductive reasoning, using a logical, evaluative, and professional method of thinking to develop approaches to effectively handle cases, while considering a wide range of factors and issues on an individual case by case basis. Each case is unique and requires a high degree of mental challenge to approach it strategically.

Considers the scope of the impact of a decision, both inside and outside the department, while taking into account the nature and severity of impacts, while considering the ease or difficulty with errors to be corrected and does not consider the result of negligence. The opportunity to make impacting decisions occurs regularly.

**Supervisory Responsibilities:**

Supervise the work activities of coworkers regarding arraignments. Manage and delegate work projects.

The incumbent will evaluate the work product of coworkers and must be alert and able to resolve and correct issues quickly regarding the work of others and compare their work product regarding accepted performance standards. Address any performance issues early and consistently with the ability to explain its impact on the office, clients and other departments.

Considers formal and informal expectations to provide mentoring, coaching and/or guidance to coworkers, other employees and students.

**Responsibility for Funds, Property and Equipment:**

Reports potentially unsafe conditions and uses equipment and material properly.

Occasionally responsible for organization's property where carelessness, error, or misappropriation would result in moderate damage or moderate monetary loss to the organization. The total value for the above would range from \$5,000 to \$150,000.

**Responsibility for Accuracy:**

Demonstrates accuracy and thoroughness, as probable errors would normally not be detected until they reached another department, office and/or client and would have serious consequences. The possibility of error exists at all times and has serious effects in regards to the organization's prestige and relationship with the general public and other departments.

**Accountabilities:**

**Freedom to Act:** Oversight. High degree of freedom to act to complete duties of the position guided by broad policy with oversight by the Chief Deputy Public Defender and/or the Public Defender.

**Monetary Impact:** Job creates a monetary impact for the organization up to an annual level of \$100,000.

**Impact On End Results:** High level of decision making and judgment within this department.

Consequences of such mistakes may include damages such as loss of data, legal liability, etc. Job has a considerable impact on the department's end results.

**Contacts with the Public:**

Initiates high volume of extensive contact within the public environment including clients and various departments where failure to exercise proper judgment would reflect poorly upon the office as a whole. Establish a good rapport with individuals so it reflects positively on the department.

Reacts well under pressure and is verbally able to defuse hostile and tense situations when they arise, with the ability to receive, understand, and respond well to questions.

Provide service to individuals with limited English proficiency and provide interpretation and translation when applicable. Shows respect and sensitivity for cultural differences. Treats the public with respect and consideration regardless of their status or position.

**Contact with Employees:**

The coordination of working with others consists of a considerable amount of contact of importance within the office and with other departments is a normal occurrence. It is typical to deal with people of middle level positions to consult with on issues/problems, requiring proper judgment and negotiation to obtain cooperation with other departments.

Contact is with co-workers in advanced supervisory positions as well as frequent contact with senior attorneys.

Requires diplomacy in discussing problems and presenting data in difficult situations, requiring a well-developed sense of strategy and timing, both inside and outside the county.

**Use of Machines, Equipment and/or Computers:**

- Regular use of typical office equipment such as desk-top computer with multiple screens, calculator, copier, printers, fax, scanner.
- Regularly manage, operate and maintain a variety of photographic, video cameras, tape, laptops, graphic, and projection equipment.
- Regularly works with special equipment such as sound recording devices.
- Regularly uses of specialized and advanced software programs for investigative purposes.

**Working Conditions:**

*The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

Incumbent is often required to enter an individual's place of residence. The conditions of residences vary, and more often than not, in a less than desirable environment that is not within normal acceptable living standards and may pose a health risk. It is to be noted that there are cases of known gang affiliations, and require a tactful and delicate approach.

An ability to react quickly and calmly in emergencies as exposure to unknown risk and disagreeable conditions occur mainly when working outside of the office which is part of the time.

- The environment ranges from an office setting to city streets to rural areas with frequent jail and prison settings.
- Travel is required.
- Frequent interruptions that require immediate attention.

- Evening/night hours will vary with trials.
- Noise level in the work environment is as expected in an office building setting

**Physical and Sensory Demands:**

*The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

- Upward and downward flexion on the neck.
- Frequent sitting. Sitting or standing for extended periods of time
- Walking long distances to reach crime scenes, climb in difficult terrain and be able to exert quick physical actions such as running.
- Repetitive use of hands to operate computers, printers, and copiers with ability to handle, control, grasp, move or feel objects, tools, or controls or to assemble very small objects. Reach with hands and arms, stoop, kneel or crouch.
- Occasional lifting, pushing, pulling, moving objects up to 30 pounds.
- Hear sounds and recognize the difference between them and/or being able to focus on one source and ignore others.
- Speak clearly so listeners can understand.
- Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, color vision and the ability to adjust focus and determine distance between objects.
- Typical office exposure to computer screens requiring repetitive periods of concentration for varied time cycles as prescribed by the tasks.