WHATCOM COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION: Public Defender
DEPARTMENT: Public Defender
REPORTS TO: County Executive

RANGE: 510
FLSA: E
EEO: 1

SUMMARY
Directs all legal and administrative functions of the Public Defender’s Office serving indigent clients. Accountable for the efficient and effective performance of the Department and the preparation of timely and professional service advice, analyses and reports as a basis for planning, funding and implementation of policy. Responsible for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and evaluating the efforts of staff. Works with other agencies and groups to accomplish the work, mission, goals and vision of the Department and the County. Ensures compliance with department/county policies and procedures, collective bargaining agreements and legal requirements. Oversees the management of programs and staff in a manner that ensures fulfillment of the Department’s and County's missions. Ensures expenditures remain within approved budget. Develops relationships with staff, other departments and individuals outside county government that encourages participation, teamwork, effective relationships and use of resources. Represents Whatcom County by maintaining a professional approach and demeanor in all activities.

Depending upon assignment, the incumbent may perform some or all of the following duties, which are a representative sample of the level of work appropriate to this position.

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

Manages effective administration of the department such as human resource management, financial management, efficient use of resources, legal compliance and timely execution of duties and roles performed by the Department. Areas of responsibility include, but are not limited to both administrative and legal functions, including performing all defense duties involving highly complex and sensitive felony criminal cases, and acting as trial council.

Develops and implements strategic short and long-range plans, programs, goals and objectives. Facilitates and coordinates cooperative planning in conjunction with other departments and entities. Reviews and updates planning recommendations. Directs activities with available personnel and in compliance with guidelines, procedures and regulations. Promotes teamwork within the County. Identifies trends and problems hindering progress and develops and implements recommendations for problem resolution.

Prepares and justifies department budget. Monitors and maintains expenditures within approved budget. Implements cost effective measures and uses resources and technology effectively to increase productivity. Negotiates contracts for services between the Department and outside entities or consultants. Assures grant and contract compliance.

Selects new employees. Determines department training needs to meet changing system or program demands. Establishes performance standards. Assigns, supervises and evaluates work consistent with assigned job description. Conducts and/or reviews performance evaluations to
guide the development of employees, provide a record of performance and ensure consistent evaluations throughout the department. Interprets and applies collective bargaining agreements and personnel policies. Reviews, revises and authorizes consistent employment actions. Initiates, documents and implements disciplinary actions. Resolves and documents grievances, works in conjunction with Human Resources concerning grievances and on other sensitive personnel matters.

On an on-going basis, researches, reviews, interprets and prepares data to analyze and makes recommendations about which programs and/or major project proposals should be initiated, modified or dropped. Sets policy, assesses and assures compliance, and interprets and applies regulations equitably. Assures appropriate policies, procedures and tasks are created and updated. Ensures enforcement of ordinances, state and federal rules and regulations, policies and procedures. Makes administrative decisions.

Responds to or supervises the resolution of the most sensitive or complex inquiries, complaints, emergencies or requests for information from other departments and the public in a courteous manner. Emphasizes public accountability and a positive public service approach with staff. Identifies and addresses customer needs. Maintains liaison with administrators, and representatives of the Courts, probation departments, Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office, local law enforcement agencies, judges, social service agencies, Stat Criminal Lab, and the Coroner’s Office. Represents the County as spokesperson at public meetings.

ADDITIONAL JOB DUTIES
Performs work on special projects that may be outside normal area of assignment, as directed.

Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS
Requires graduation from an accredited school of law AND six years progressively responsible experience as a practicing criminal defense trial attorney on felony cases, INCLUDING three years of management/supervisory experience.

Must be a current member in good standing of the Washington State Bar Association, OR must be a current member in good standing of another State Bar Association AND must become a member of the Washington State Bar Association by passing the next Washington State Bar exam.

Requires knowledge of:
The field of assignment sufficient to perform thoroughly and accurately the full scope of responsibility as illustrated by example in this job description.

Organizational and community dynamics and principles and practices of leadership, management and supervision.


Fiscal management including budget preparation, grant administration, service and
intergovernmental contract negotiation and administration, expenditure control and record keeping.

Computer operation and a variety of software including word processing, spreadsheet, database and other applications specific to the area of assignment

Safety and security hazards, precautions, standards, policies and procedures pertinent to the area of assignment.

Requires the ability to:

Strategically plan, prioritize, coordinate, organize, and evaluate staffing and services. Train, direct, and coach staff. Administer and change plans, policies and work programs.

Use tact, discretion, respect, persuasion, diplomacy and courtesy to gain the cooperation of others and establish and maintain effective teams and a professional relationship and rapport with public officials, representatives of other entities, department heads, co-workers, employees and diverse members of the public.

Apply sound judgment and problem-solving techniques to evaluate operations, to make reasoned, timely and consistent decisions and to facilitate the effective resolution of problems, grievances and complaints.

Listen attentively and communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with individuals and groups in clear, concise language appropriate for the purpose and parties addressed, including preparing and making public presentations which can be understood by non-technical listeners and preparing and/or directing preparation of comprehensive written reports, materials and correspondence.

Effectively promote the commitment of the County to provide outstanding public, intra- and inter-departmental customer service.

Assure that absolute confidentiality is maintained as required and sensitive information is handled appropriately.

Provide leadership and maintain a high level of personal and professional integrity and honesty.

Work effectively in a multi-task environment, effectively delegate responsibility and authority, and respond to and reconcile competing interests.

Read, understand, interpret, analyze and provide direction to assure appropriate application of policies, procedures, legal requirements and regulations.

Promote staff and team development and high performance by assuring regular, effective and consistent feedback and evaluation.

Estimate and analyze costs and effectiveness of programs. Monitor and interpret fiscal and statistical information.

Develop ways to identify, improve and promote efficient systems and processes.

Maintain current knowledge for assigned areas and adapt to new technologies, keeping personal and team technical skills up-to-date and using technology to increase productivity.
Work independently and cooperatively as a member of a team.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**
Required to successfully complete all continuing legal education requirements as mandated by the Washington State Bar Association, which includes 2 hours of ethics credits per year throughout employment.

Must have a driving record that meets County standards and possess a valid driver's license at time of hire and throughout employment.

Background check must meet County criteria.

Must obtain a First Aid/CPR card within six (6) months of employment and maintain throughout employment.

Must pass job-related tests.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**
Works in an office or meeting setting; appears in variety of courts, interviews clients in the jail and hospital, investigates crime scenes, and interviews witnesses at a variety of locations. Sits or stands for long periods of time. May occasionally lift and carry items weighing up to 30 pounds. Attends meetings or performs duties outside of normal office hours and works extended hours during trials. Moves throughout the County's facilities. Frequently drives motor vehicle to perform duties in the field, at other sites or travel out of the County. Possibility of exposure to hostile and offensive language and physical harm from violent and/or verbally abusive clients. Uses appropriate safety equipment and follows established safety policies, practices and procedures.

The statements contained herein reflect, as of the date signed, general details as necessary to describe the principal functions of this job, the level of knowledge and skill typically required and the scope of responsibility, but should not be considered an all-inclusive listing of work requirements. Individuals may perform other duties as assigned, including work in other functional areas, to cover absences or relief, to equalize peak work periods or otherwise to balance the workload. At its sole discretion, Whatcom County may consider combinations of education, experience, certifications, and training in lieu of specifically required qualifications contained herein.

Whatcom County provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, military service, genetics, and any other legally protected class. Whatcom County also complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment.

**Employee Status: This is an FLSA exempt position and as such is paid on a salaried basis and is not entitled to overtime. The position is also subject to an "employee at will" doctrine.**

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**Signature:**

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**Date:** 8-10-17

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