

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

County of Humboldt, California



CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

ANNUAL SALARY: \$160,139—\$181,188

THE COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT SEEKS A CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER (Public Defender) who is an active member in the California State Bar and has a history of providing topnotch criminal defense legal services and administrative and leadership experience, preferably in a public defender's office in California. We are looking for an exceptional candidate who wants to live and be a part of Humboldt County, which is a rural, tightknit community, that has a fair share of socio-economic challenges. We want someone who is prepared, skilled, and ready to apply their legal skills to assist indigent persons facing deprivation of liberty or other civil rights challenges, and serves as a knowledgeable and engaged resource for staff and the community. This position will lead the Public Defender's Office who collectively carry an annual case load of approximately 1,800 felony cases and 3,600 misdemeanor cases, and oversee 11 attorneys, several investigators and support staff, and an annual budget of \$4.9 million. This candidate will also carry a caseload, which will include some of the most complex, and life top cases. The selected Public Defender will use their exceptional people skills to successfully work with opposing counsel, probation, and other law enforcement professionals and agencies. ***Come join Humboldt County's Public Defender's office and help us make a difference while leading an exceptional and dedicated team of support staff and attorneys, who are committed to serving those in need of legal assistance in our community!***



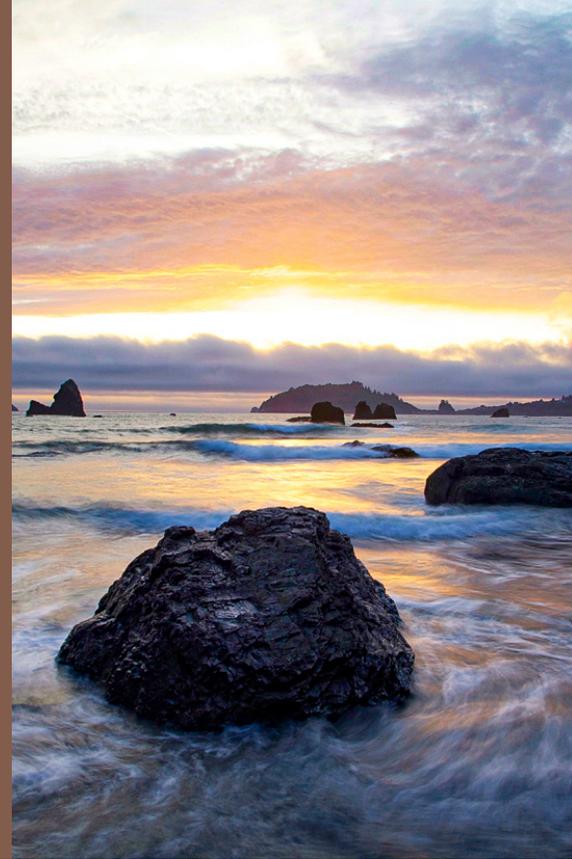
THE COMMUNITY/THE COUNTY

HUMBOLDT COUNTY IS ONE of the most beautiful places in America. It is located in the heart of Northern California's majestic coastal redwood region and runs along the Pacific coastline. It is world-renowned for its stunning landscapes and is one of the most scenic rural counties in the United States. The Redwood Coast is a paradise for all outdoor activities including hiking, backpacking, fishing, golfing, river rafting, kayaking and more. Humboldt County has several rivers, lakes and hundreds of streams, as well as county, state and national parks, beaches and campgrounds. Humboldt State University and the College of the Redwoods provide excellent educational opportunities, as well as entertainment and culturally enriching activities. Eureka, the county seat, is located 275 miles north of San Francisco, and overlooks the historic Humboldt Bay. The county has a total population of over 134,000 and is home to eight federally recognized Native American Tribes. With reasonably priced housing, moderate weather year-round, and a diverse local arts scene, Humboldt County offers the best of community living without the stress and burdens of the more urbanized areas of California, and a great place to raise a family. It is a place where you know your neighbors, can build a sense of community, and build partnerships to expand resources. The County Administration includes 20 departments/agencies, an annual operating budget of \$450.8 million, and employs approximately 2,400 employees.

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

THE PUBLIC DEFENDER PROVIDES aggressive, competent, ethical representation to indigent persons facing deprivation of liberty or other civil rights challenges. The Public Defender's office is charged with providing services to persons entitled to representation as determined by the Superior Court. In performing those services, the Public Defender will provide information, representation, and respect while meeting the needs of the Superior Court and County of Humboldt.

In 2019, the Public Defender's Office and Conflict Counsel's Office represented clients in 1,871 felony cases and 3,632 misdemeanor cases. In addition, the two offices were appointed in 183 juvenile cases, and 55 contempt of court cases arising out of Family Law litigation. They were also appointed on approximately 500 conservatorship cases, as well as in mental health writs and to represent patients in hearings on petitions for involuntary medication of anti-psychotics.



THE JOB

THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER (**PUBLIC DEFENDER**) is an at-will position appointed by and reporting to the Board of Supervisors, and reports on a day to day basis and administratively to the County Administrative Officer. This position will lead the Public Defender's Office with 11 attorneys, three investigators, and six support staff and an annual budget of \$4.9 million. The Public Defender is a working leader who spends approximately 30% of their time carrying a caseload, including the most complicated litigation cases, and will support other Deputy Public Defender's caseloads as needed. The Public Defender will also assist with coordinating and oversee the caseloads, court calendars, facilitate regular meetings and will be purposeful in the development of new and experienced lawyers and staff. This position is also responsible for the oversight of operational and budget administration, employee relations and other personnel matters, policy, and obtaining and managing various grants. This position fosters cooperative working relationships among County Departments, intergovernmental regulatory agencies, courts, and various public and private groups.



OUR IDEAL CANDIDATE

OUR IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL be available and accessible, a bridge builder, an excellent communicator, and effectively able to build trust with the community, district attorney, public defender team, clients, and the courts. The next Public Defender will be confident, competent, politically savvy, and influential. We are looking for an experienced defense professional who also has a demonstrated ability to successfully lead a team and foster a culture of flexibility, forward-thinking, and continuous improvement. The ideal candidate will have the ability to handle the full range of public defense cases, including life top cases, and serves as a knowledgeable and engaged resource for staff and the community, who keeps the Board of Supervisors, CAO and County leaders educated and informed.

IN ADDITION, THE PUBLIC DEFENDER WILL:

- ▶ Value client services and foster a department culture that is responsive, dedicated and ensures the best possible legal defense for clients.
- ▶ Be open and transparent, and able to have difficult conversations with tact.
- ▶ Build and maintain successful working relationships with the District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, and other law enforcement agencies.
- ▶ Take an active role in providing staff with professional growth opportunities, and possess a desire to develop, motivate and supervise a diverse legal team.
- ▶ Be a strategic business minded leader.
- ▶ Be a master at defense strategy.
- ▶ Have good leadership and interpersonal skills to work successfully with all levels in the organization.
- ▶ Be willing and able to effectively work with opposing counsel.
- ▶ Have excellent interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills.
- ▶ Lead by example and navigate effectively in a political environment.



YOUR LEGAL BACKGROUND SHOULD INCLUDE:

- ▶ Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university and a Juris Doctorate from an accredited school of law;
- ▶ Must possess a valid US driver's license upon date of application. Must obtain California driver's license following hire date per California DMV regulations;
- ▶ Ten (10) years of experience in the active practice of criminal law in the State of California as a practicing attorney, which includes at least four (4) years in the defense of the indigent in the State of California and three (3) years in a supervising or managing attorneys and support staff;
- ▶ Active membership in the California State Bar.





COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

\$160,139–\$181,188 annual salary, and a generous benefit program that includes the following elements:

RETIREMENT: The County participates in CalPERS retirement system.

The County also participates in Social Security.

MEDICAL /DENTAL/VISION

INSURANCE: The County participates in the CalPERS health insurance program, providing several options for employees; the County pays nearly all of the employee premium and a portion of dependent coverage. The County also provides a dental and vision plan with premium for the employee and family paid in full by the County.

VACATION: 12 days per year (1 day after 1 month of employment); 3 weeks after 3 years; 4 weeks after 10 years.

HOLIDAYS: 14 paid days per year (includes 2 personal holidays).

SICK LEAVE: Employees earn 12 days per year (unlimited accumulation).

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE: 10 paid days per fiscal year.

WELLNESS REIMBURSEMENT: \$1,000 per fiscal year for the purchase of wellness-related equipment and services (prorated for new employees).

ADDITIONALLY: The County offers life insurance, longevity pay, vacation conversion, deferred compensation, and an employee assistance program.



HOW TO APPLY

This position will remain open until filled, however for first consideration apply by **JUNE 29**; candidates are encouraged to submit their application as soon as possible.



SAVE THE DATES

Interviews will be virtual and take place on **JULY 22 & 23**; candidates will need to be available for both days.

Please contact your recruiter, Wendi Brown, with any questions:

wendi@wbcpinc.com

866.929.WBCP (9227) toll free
541.664.0376 direct