

Jurisdictional Class: Competitive
Exempt for County Service (1)
EEO Category: Officials/Administrative
Revised: 02/03/2026

PUBLIC DEFENDER

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: The work involves responsibility for representing indigent defendants charged with crimes, when requested. The Public Defender shall represent without charge, or by order of the Court with the consent of the defendant, each indigent defendant who is charged with a crime, as defined by Section 722(a) of the County Law. The Public Defender shall counsel and represent the defendant at every stage of the proceedings following his arrest and shall initiate such proceedings as in his or her judgement are necessary to protect the rights of the accused; and may at his or her discretion, prosecute any appeals if in his or her judgement the facts and circumstances warrant such. In addition, the Public Defender may assign professional, technical and clerical personnel in the investigation, preparation, conduct and appeal in any court proceedings involving indigent defendants. The work is to be performed under guidelines provided by law. The incumbent does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative Only)

Assigns counsel or attorneys for each indigent defendant who is charged with a crime;
Appoints sub-professional, technical and clerical employees to assist in defending indigents;
Represents and counsels defendants at every stage of the proceedings following an arrest;
Initiates such proceedings which are necessary to protect the rights of the accused;
Prepares any appeal which is warranted under existing circumstances;
Keeps records and makes reports.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS: Comprehensive knowledge of the principles and practices of criminal law applicable to State and Federal criminal laws; comprehensive knowledge of criminal court procedures and of the rules of evidence; a high degree of skill in the preparation of briefs; skill in presentation of defense before a jury; special ability to analyze, appraise and apply legal principles, facts and precedent to legal problems; good command of language; initiative; tact; courtesy; good professional and administrative judgement; good address.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Admission to the Bar of New York State **AND** five (5) years of experience in public or private practice of law.

Adopted: Unknown
Revised: 04/26/1996, 07/17/1996, 05/07/1997, 02/03/2026