



ATASCOSA AREA ADVOCATES PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE ASSISTANT CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

POSITION SUMMARY: the Atascosa Area Advocates Public Defender's Office (AAAPDO) is a regional Public Defender's Office serving Atascosa, Wilson, Karnes and Frio counties. We provide quality legal defense to individuals charged with criminal offenses who cannot afford counsel. The office handles felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile cases in all four counties. The Assistant Chief is a full-time employee of Atascosa County, Texas and will assist the Chief in managing the AAAPDO and supervising junior attorneys. The Assistant Chief will handle a full felony caseload, to include many serious, high-level felonies. They will also handle juvenile cases. This is an exciting opportunity to work in a holistic, client-centered public defender's office.

Atascosa, Wilson, Karnes and Frio counties provide idyllic, quiet family life, with kind-hearted residents, amenities within a short drive, excellent schools, and family-centered events throughout the year. We are ideally located in South Central Texas. Our region is an easy drive to San Antonio, Austin, Houston, and beaches along the Gulf Coast.

COMPENSATION: \$115,000 ANNUALLY

Applications, resumes, and cover letters via email to Chief Public Defender Stephanie Esparza at sesarza@co.atascosa.tx.us, via mail to Chief Public Defender, 607 W. Oaklawn, Pleasanton, TX 78064, or drop off at the AAAPDO office located at 607 W. Oaklawn, Pleasanton, TX 78064.

Applications Close: July 10, 2026 or until filled

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Help supervise an office of approximately fourteen attorneys and six support staff.
- Ensure that the AAAPDO provides quality criminal defense representation that complies with federal and state constitutions, state statutes, ethical rules, and state and national best practices.
- Oversee and provide criminal legal representation to defendants.
- Assist with hiring and evaluation of attorneys and staff as needed.
- Ensure that all attorneys and staff are trained to comply with state and federal constitutions, state and federal laws, ethical rules and best practices, including holistic, client-centered representation.
- Direct staff on legal issues, case dispositions, and advocacy.
- Supervise professional and support personnel.
- Assist the Chief Public Defender on financial and budget issues and compliance with date collection and reporting requirements.
- Coordinate meetings with clients, judges, prosecutors, commissioners, and others.
- Identify community-based resources that support client needs.
- Present to social and civic groups, incarcerated persons, and other organizations to explain,

publicize, and promote the public defender program and defendants' rights.

- Represent the AAAPDO, as needed, in appropriate public and professional meetings and conferences, in interactions with state, county, and municipal officials, county and state bar associations, and citizen groups.
- Perform additional duties that are logical assignments to the position of Assistant Chief Public Defender.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES:

Advanced research, writing, and advocacy skills. Leadership, supervision, management, and organizational skills. Advanced knowledge of the rules of evidence, case law, Texas Penal Code, and Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. Ability to motivate, train, supervise, and develop attorneys and support staff.

Applicant must have no disciplinary history (including private reprimands) with the State Bar of Texas or any other state bar.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Juris Doctor degree from an accredited law school for at least seven years.
- Licensed by the State Bar of Texas and must be in good standing with the State Bar.
- Demonstrated commitment to criminal justice and indigent defense.
- Embrace a holistic, client-centered philosophy for criminal defense.
- Litigated criminal cases for at least five years.
- Tried at least twelve cases to verdict.
- Worked as a lawyer in public defense for at least four years.
- Managed daily operations for a legal organization.
- Ability to pass a physical, drug, and alcohol test
- Hold an active driver's license

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS:

- Ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods of time
- Ability to occasionally lift up to 25 pounds