

POSITION: First Assistant Public Defender
DEPARTMENT: Public Defender Office
REPORTS TO: Public Defender
STATUS: Exempt/Senior Management

DATE WRITTEN: 8/2026
WRITTEN BY: KC
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GRADE: 15

POSITION OBJECTIVE:

This position is designed to be the second-in-command position in the office. The First Assistant Public Defender assumes the duties of the Public Defender in his absence, has general supervisory responsibility over all other Assistant Public Defenders within the office and is assigned to a felony trial docket.

DIMENSIONS:

Reporting to the First Assistant Public Defender are the attorneys in the Felony, Misdemeanor, Juvenile, and Traffic Courtrooms.

Average Cases Filed Annually:

Annual Felony Cases:	1,067
Annual Misdemeanor Cases:	1,195
Annual Traffic Cases:	12,001
Annual Juvenile Cases:	664

JOB DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Responsible for over-seeing the functioning of the felony, misdemeanor, juvenile and traffic courtrooms to facilitate the orderly disposition of cases assigned to the public defender's office in those courtrooms.
- Provides ongoing training and supervision of Assistant Public Defenders regarding their responsibilities in their courtrooms.
- Demonstrates a superior ability to understand complex issues, construct a strong case for the defense, present and cross-examine witnesses, argue points of law to the court, and firmly and effectively articulate before the jury. Displays a leadership role within the office and courtroom.
- Implements the policies and procedures of the Public Defender.
- Compiles reports regarding the performance of all criminal and quasi-criminal courtrooms to assist the Public Defender in developing and implementing policies needed to staff each courtroom.
- Serves "on call" as needed in cases of crisis and emergency and on weekend arrests.
- Stays abreast of changes in the law and periodically updates the office on the changes.
- Identifies and secures the services of expert witnesses.
- Determines appropriate trial strategy and researches relevant points of law.
- Presents defense motions, including motions to suppress evidence and statements.
- Other duties as assigned.

EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND OTHER JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Must possess a Juris Doctor degree and have an unrestricted license to practice law in the State of Illinois.

Must have a minimum of 5 years experience in the defense of criminal law and have a proven record for handling felony jury trials.

Must have ability to work in concert with the Public Defender and act on his behalf.

Must have the capability to handle high pressure situations under highly stressful circumstances.

The work schedule may vary in order to accomplish the tasks of the job.

Must be able to supervise, train, and mentor assistant public defenders.

Must be able to analyze and interpret statistical information.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

This position requires the hearing ability sufficient enough to hear others in person, over the telephone, and over an intercom; the speaking ability sufficient enough to speak to others in person, over a telephone, and over an intercom; and the visual ability sufficient to read and complete reports, correspondence, etc.

Performs highly complex and varied tasks requiring independent knowledge, its application to a variety of situations, as well as exercise of independent judgment.