



Brown County

25 Market Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401
www.brown.sd.us

Chief Public Defender

Public Defender Office

Wage: \$5,097.33 - \$5,576.92/bi-weekly; DOE

Opening date: 10/01/2026

Closing date: 10/31/2026

JOB SUMMARY

The Brown County Public Defender Office will provide quality legal defense to persons who cannot afford counsel in felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, mental health commitments and alcohol commitment cases in Brown County, SD. The Public Defender will also sit on the Brown County treatment courts.

The Chief Public Defender will lead an office of attorneys and staff. The Chief will be a full-time employee of Brown County. Outside legal work is prohibited.

MAJOR DUTIES

The Chief oversees and provides representation, consultation and advice to indigent defendants in circuit, magistrate and juvenile court proceedings.

The Chief will 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.

The Chief supervises professional and support personnel.

The Chief allocates resources for services, equipment, facilities, and finances planning and advocating for future services and budgetary needs of the office.

The Chief hires, evaluates, disciplines, and dismisses attorneys and staff.

The Chief supervises planning, development, preparation, and monitoring of annual budget, grant funding, and statistical reports.

The Chief directs staff on legal issues, case dispositions, and advocacy.

The Chief represents the public defense function in criminal justice coordinating meetings with clients, judges, prosecutors, commissioners, and others.

The Chief presents to social and civic groups, incarcerated persons, and other organizations to explain, publicize, and promote the public defender program and defendants' rights.

The Chief represents the Public Defender Office in appropriate public and professional meetings and conferences; in interactions with state, county, and municipal officials; county and state bar associations; and citizen groups.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

- Knowledge of local, state, and federal law.
- Knowledge of investigative tools and techniques.
- Knowledge of trial proceedings.
- Knowledge of computers and job-related software programs.
- Skill in the completion of legal research and writing.
- Skill in producing persuasive legal arguments.
- Skill in the analysis of problems and the development and implementation of solutions.
- Skill in training and supervising personnel.
- Skill in oral and written communication.
- Skill in leadership, management, and budgeting

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The Chief reports regularly to the Brown County Public Defender Advisory Committee and the Brown County Board of Commissioners.

GUIDELINES

The Chief Public Defender ensures that the office provides quality criminal defense representation that complies with federal and state constitutions, federal law, state statutes, rules of professional conduct, ethics rules, and state and national best practices, as well as county and department policy and procedure. These guidelines require judgment, selection, and interpretation in application.

COMPLEXITY/SCOPE OF WORK

- The work consists of varied legal duties. The variety of tasks to be performed contributes to the complexity of the position.
- The fast pace of the working environment contributes to the complexity of the position.
- The purpose of this position is to participate in the defense of criminal cases. Success in this position

contributes to the successful defense of criminal cases.

CONTACTS

- Contacts are typically with co-workers, legal assistants, other county employees, other attorneys, law enforcement personnel, judges, victims, witnesses, defendants, and members of the general public.
- Contacts are typically to provide services; to give or exchange information; to resolve problems; to motivate or influence persons; or to justify, defend or negotiate matters.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS/ WORK ENVIRONMENT

- The work is typically performed while sitting at a desk or table or while intermittently sitting, standing, or stooping. The employee occasionally lifts light objects.
- The work is typically performed in an office or courtroom.

SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- This position will supervise attorneys and staff.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Graduation from an accredited school of law.
- Current, active membership in the State Bar of South Dakota or ability to obtain at the most immediate opportunity.
- Candidates for Chief Public Defender should possess leadership, litigation, public defense, supervision, management, and budgeting skills:
 - Has litigated criminal cases for at least 7 years.
 - Has tried multiple cases to verdict.
 - Has worked as a criminal defense lawyer for at least 5 years.
 - Has supervised at least 5 attorneys and staff.
 - Has served as a supervisor for at least 4 years.
 - Has managed daily operations for a legal organization for at least 4 years.
 - Has helped create or oversee an organizational budget.
- Priority will be given to candidates who meet or exceed the description above.

Equal Opportunity Employer

APPLY BY

Submit Brown County application or resume to:

- Brown County
Human Resources
25 Market St
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Fax: 605-725-2355

Email: Humanresources@browncounty.sd.gov

Email: Allison.Tunheim@browncounty.sd.gov