

Council on Public Defense Volunteer Position Description

The Council on Public Defense (CPD) unites representatives of the bar; private and public criminal defense attorneys; judicial representatives appointed by the Washington Supreme Court, the Superior Court Judges Association and the District and Municipal Court Judges Association; current and former prosecutors; and the public to address new and recurring challenges that impact the public defense system. The CPD educates and informs policy makers on issues that need reform and provides concrete proposals that are enhanced by the comprehensive nature of the CPD membership.

The CPD's recent work has focused on the following areas: equity and racial justice, pre-trial justice, legal financial obligations, defense standards, public defense and independence, and mental health and public defense. In doing this work, the CPD is committed to embracing anti-racism, eliminating explicit and implicit biases, and advocating to dismantle white supremacy in the legal system. The CPD's statement on racial justice in public defense and the CPD's Charter can be viewed at <https://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Committees-Boards-and-Other-Groups/council-public-defense>

Position overview: The CPD unites diverse members of the legal community and public to support high-quality and accessible public defense services. Members of the CPD have a unique opportunity to influence public defense practices in WA State by:

- Attending monthly meeting and bringing their experience and perspective to discussions and votes.
- Participating as active members on at least one committee. Current committees include: Defense Standards, Public Defense and Independence, and Race Equity.
- Providing review and feedback on substantive areas relating to public defense, including but not limited to proposed court rules, guidelines, potential legislation, comments and other issue advocacy.

Appointment is for a two-year term with eligibility to be reappointed for two additional two-year terms.

Time commitment: Council members are requested to actively participate in the CPD's mission.

- The CPD meets monthly for 2.5 hours via Zoom.
- Council members are expected to participate in at least one committee, which generally meet monthly by videoconference with additional meetings as needed to accomplish the goals of the committee.
- Monthly time commitments range from 3.5 to 10 hours.

Requirements: The CPD is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive membership. The positions that the CPD is seeking to fill include:

- Two at-large public defenders
- One at-large member who can be an attorney or a public member
- One representative from local government or a public defense administrator who can be an attorney or a public member
- One current or former prosecutor

Preferred qualifications and skills:

- Knowledge/experience with public defense in WA state and nationally

- Openness to engage in meaningful conversations and activities to promote equity and inclusion with the CPD and throughout the public defense system, with an emphasis on race equity.
- Willingness to take initiative on tasks and committees
- Openness to productive discussion/debate
- Ability to fulfill time and involvement commitments

Benefits

- CPD members have an opportunity to improve the criminal justice system and to evaluate practices which particularly impact the poor.
- Networking.
- Influence, improve and support public defense across the state.
- Leadership opportunities.
- Public service.

Reimbursement policy: This is an unpaid volunteer position. Voting Council members are eligible for reimbursement under WSBA's committee volunteer reimbursement policy.

Selection and appointment process: Candidates are vetted by the CPD chair and Vice-Chair. Recommendations are made to the Board of Governor's Nominations Committee, which makes the appointments.

For further information: See <http://www.wsba.org/Legal-Community/Committees-Boards-and-Other-Groups/Council-on-Public-Defense>

How to apply: See instructions at www.wsba.org/joincommittee. Questions about the application? Email barleaders@wsba.org.