



Chief Public Defender

Kalamazoo Defender is a non-profit organization established for the purpose of representing the adult indigent population charged with a crime within Kalamazoo County. It is Kalamazoo County's Public Defender.

Three things distinguish Kalamazoo Defender from most public defender offices in Michigan: 1) It is a tax-exempt non-profit organization, independent from County government; 2) It is governed by a board of citizens with legal, judicial, medical and social work experience; and 3) It represents a "holistic" model of representation, integrated with Kalamazoo's many human service organizations in order to attend to the whole client, beyond the strict confines of a particular criminal charge.

Kalamazoo Defender's mission is rooted in the conviction that poverty and various forms of discrimination put our clients on inequitable footing within and beyond our criminal justice system.

Our job is to be their zealous defender in the face of these systemic barriers, upholding not just the letter but the spirit of the U.S. Constitution's Sixth Amendment, whatever the particulars of a given case.

Core Responsibilities

- Lead and mentor 22 associate public defenders who will be responsible for delivering zealous representation to the adult indigent criminal defendants charged within Kalamazoo County.
- Establish goals and process for assigning cases.
- Identify training opportunities necessary to develop talent and satisfy continuing legal education requirements dictated by the State of Michigan.
- Define mentorship structures necessary to ensure a collaborative environment, conducive to fostering excellence in legal representation and the utmost respect for all clients and coworkers.
- Serve as counsel in the most challenging cases that are assigned to Kalamazoo Defender by the Courts of Kalamazoo County.

Expertise and Experience

- A Juris Doctorate with license to practice in the State of Michigan—and good standing with the State Bar of Michigan.
- Extensive experience litigating cases, with substantial criminal trial experience, including taking complicated and serious offenses to trial.
- Demonstrated administrative and supervisory experience, public defense experience preferred.
- Exemplary interpersonal skills, including the ability to organize, educate, and motivate a team of attorneys with dedicated servant leadership.

- Commitment to the communities from which our clients come, and to the holistic representation process at the heart of Kalamazoo Defender’s model.
- Highly compelling references and an impressive legal track record.

Benefits

- Competitive salary, quality health care coverage, and generous retirement contributions.
- An opportunity to work within—and help define—a dynamic, innovative legal program, backed by a County capable of maximizing Kalamazoo Defender’s mission.
- As part of the Kalamazoo community, public school attendees are entitled to participation in the Kalamazoo Promise.

How to Apply:

Please send your resume, a cover letter, and your references to Jobs@KalamazooDefender.org or the following address:

Kalamazoo Defender
277 South Rose Street, Suite 5000
Kalamazoo, MI 49007