

## Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

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Class Title: Chief Social Worker  
Class Series: Social Workers  
Class Code: R49H26  
Reports to: Managing Attorney or State Public Defender (or designee)  
Direct Reports: Social Work staff  
Range Min/Max: \$5,610 - \$8,415

### **GENERAL SUMMARY:**

This classification describes the manager responsible for ensuring the social work operations and services provided are completed in an effective and efficient manner, to secure the best possible representation for OSPD clients. Positions oversee the social work function and staff across multiple offices, which may include supervising multiple employees through first-line supervisors and/or direct supervision of functional staff. Positions that oversee the work as a second-level supervisor, serve as the second-level approval in performance reviews and may initiate and carry-out personnel actions. Positions require interpersonal and communications skills (e.g. providing direction and feedback, constructively dealing with conflict) and apply an advanced level of problem-solving ability. Working in collaboration with other members of management, positions are responsible for overall planning and direction of the work and staff; overseeing administrative and operational processes related to the roles of social workers; training and supervising staff, directly or indirectly; resolving personnel matters; managing caseloads/workloads; resolving high-level client and other operational matters; and, communicating and implementing directives established at the higher management level. Positions perform licensed social work practice, typically in an advanced capacity; however, may be assigned a reduced caseload as deemed necessary by the State Public Defender. This classification is not progressive; positions are allocated based on the business needs as determined by the State Public Defender.

This class is distinguished by the responsibility for functional oversight of the agency-wide social work program and practices; and, authority through licensure to practice clinical social work and supervise clinical practice performed by licensed social workers or student interns. Positions in this class serve as a member of a public law firm providing constitutionally required legal services to the indigent accused. Therefore positions are bound by the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct including rules regarding the attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality.

### **PRIMARY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- The Chief Social Worker serves as part of the defense team, and as such, is bound by the Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct including rules regarding the attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality; and, is responsible to ensure all social workers comply with this requirement.
- Provides direct supervision over social work staff as a first and/or second-line supervisor or assists in coordinating supervision of social workers with the Office Heads where employees are assigned. Supervisory responsibilities include ensuring that employees follow policies, procedures and adhere to standards and principles of social work practice; making hiring, termination and disciplinary recommendations; and, conducting or participating in employee performance evaluations and reviews.
- In conjunction with the Office Heads and other members of the management teams, assists in coordinating case assignments and daily activities; modifying and authorizing work

## Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

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procedures; implementing policy and process changes developed at a higher management level; and, resolving personnel matters and conflicts, challenges and disagreements with external representatives. Conducts clinical supervision, case review and monthly group supervision for social workers and coordinates internship programs.

- Assists the Office Heads by managing and directing the agency's social work program through training and development of social work staff; and, developing policies, procedures and guidelines for social workers. Serves as a resource or technical expert to social workers and other staff in matters regarding social work practice and professional ethics. Serves as an advocate for social workers and a liaison between the State Office and Regional Offices in resolving internal conflicts, challenges and disagreements.
- Assists the Office Heads to ensure social workers collaborate as members of the defense teams within their assigned Regional Offices through consulting with attorneys on the appropriate approach to the case; maintaining regular and timely communications with attorneys and other members of the defense team to keep apprised as to the status and progress on the case; and, to seek clarification on social work requests in order to prioritize and complete assigned tasks on the social work request within appropriate timelines.
- Ensures compliance and reporting requirements are met in accordance with legislative and juvenile justice commission directives such as, goals of reducing juvenile incarceration.
- Plans, develops and implements a training model for newly hired social workers. Delivers training related to social work techniques and methods agency-wide as needed. Serves as a mentor being readily and regularly accessible to others. Monitors training and conference attendance, coordinating with regional offices and the State Office training unit to ensure social workers complete required training.
- Researches and keeps informed of trends, practices and developments in the field; specifically, as it relates to clients and legal practices in the criminal defense system, relevant Department of Regulatory Agency (DORA) regulations, and the National Association of Social Worker (NASW) standards. Attends and participates in external training programs and conferences, intra- and inter-agency committees and shares updates with agency staff as appropriate.
- Participates in special assignments with system-wide impact as directed by the State Public Defender including, but not limited to, assisting in developing a strategic plan to expand the agency's social worker program to serve more clients.
- Frequent travel within and occasionally outside the State of Colorado, including occasional overnight travel.
- Assists regional offices in social work functions, as assigned.
- Attends meetings and trainings as required.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

# Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

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## QUALIFICATIONS

### Education and Experience:

Master's degree from an accredited college or university educational program in social work; licensure as a clinical social worker (LCSW) in the State of Colorado; and, experience conducting clinical assessments of mental health disorders, substance abuse, and psychosocial variables affecting behavior and development of juveniles or adults preferably in a public defense system, including demonstrated experience, skills and training in leading others.

### Conditions of Employment:

- Maintain licensure for clinical social work practice in the State of Colorado;
- Valid driver's license and access to a working vehicle.

### Knowledge (position requirements at entry):

- Psychosocial variables affecting behavior and development;
- Evidence-based theories, models and practice;
- Knowledge of criminal justice system, legal proceedings and the role of the public defender;
- Professional and constitutional ethics principles and practices including client confidentiality and attorney-client privilege.

### Skills (position requirements at entry):

- Leadership skills to effectively mentor, train, develop and guide others; delegate responsibilities; and set an example for other social workers;
- Ability to evaluate performance, provide feedback on performance, and write objective and comprehensive employee evaluations;
- Strong client service focus;
- Ability to comply with rules regarding the attorney-client privilege and client confidentiality;
- Ability to apply theories and principles of clinical social work practice;
- Ability to assess implications of physical, mental health or substance abuse issues on development and behavior;
- Critical thinking within professional contexts;
- Interpersonal skills to establish positive, productive and respectful working relationships with clients, client families and persons of diverse backgrounds;
- Ability to establish effective working relationships with members of the Public Defense system, witnesses, court personnel, mental health experts and others in the medical and mental health community;
- Attention to detail and the ability to process and retain large amounts of information;
- Excellent communication skills, including interviewing, report-writing and giving/receiving direction or feedback;
- Ability to handle emergency or crisis situations and deal calmly and effectively in a highly stressful environment over long periods of time;
- Proficient in standard software applications such as Microsoft Office Word, Excel, Power Point, internet browsers, e-mail and Adobe Acrobat.

## Colorado Public Defender – Class Specification

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**Physical Requirements** *(Employees must be able to meet the physical demands of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation.)*

Light Work: Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or a negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. Physical demands are in excess of those of sedentary work. Light work usually requires walking or standing to a significant degree.

- Talking and hearing;
- Vision to review discovery and records.