

BENTON COUNTY OFFICE OF PUBLIC DEFENSE

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS – CHILD SUPPORT CONTEMPT DEFENSE

Summary

Application deadline is November 17, 2017 but Benton County reserves the right to review and evaluate applications as they are received and to award contracts whenever it sees fit including before the application deadline so early application is encouraged.

Benton County seeks applications from interested and qualified attorneys to provide legally mandated public defense services to adults subject to Show Cause proceedings and facing potential incarceration for failing to pay child support. This will primarily be for cases initiated by the Benton County Prosecutor's Office Child Support Division:

Number of Contracts	Contract Type	Contract Caseload	Compensation
1	Child Support Contempt Defense	Up to 75 assigned cases per year	\$1,645 per month for Jan 1, 2018 – Jun 30, 2018 \$1,845 thereafter with potential increase in 2019.

Contract period: Jan 1, 2018 – Dec 31, 2019

Background

Benton County provides legally mandated public defense services to adults subject to show cause hearings in Superior Court because of failure to pay child support, and facing the prospect of jail time for contempt of court.

Benton County Office of Public Defense is a professional public defense agency staffed by full-time administrative staff including a Public Defense Manager, and full-time staff-defenders. BCOPD operates under a public defense ordinance enacted by the Benton County Board of County Commissioners, and is always guided by its [Mission Statement and Values](#).

Currently, most of the public defense services provided in Benton County are provided through contracts with private attorneys.

Duties

The attorney awarded this contract would be responsible for all aspects of effective and competent defense of assigned show cause proceedings filed against adults. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making necessary court appearances and advocating on behalf of clients
- Investigating cases and analyzing legal issues
- Negotiating with prosecutors about the resolution of show cause matters including adjustment of payment plans, establishing of terms of release, or necessity for future court dates
- Meeting with clients as necessary to inform them of their rights, educate them about their case and its status, and involve them with case defense strategy as necessary and appropriate
- Defending clients during show cause hearings as necessary

This contract requires attendance at the regularly scheduled Child Support Contempt docket which is held on Tuesdays at 1:15 pm and which may last from 2-3 hours.

Caseload

Historic Caseload Trends

Year	Newly appointed cases
2017	43
2016	43
2015	33
2014	34

The attorney in this role would also be responsible for some amount of routine work (mostly representing clients in status hearings) in cases where a defendant has been ordered to make payments or take certain actions (such as provide proof of disability or job search logs) while still under a show cause order.

Compensation

Compensation has been set for the year 2018 as follows:

Period	Compensation
Jan 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018	\$1,645 per month
July 1, 2018 – Dec 31, 2018	\$1,845 per month

Compensation is subject to review during the budget planning period for the 2019-2020 biennial budget (anticipated to be between May, 2018 and July, 2018)

Qualifications

- Active membership (in good standing) in the Washington State Bar;
- At least six months full-time experience either as a criminal defense attorney or criminal prosecutor;
- Familiarity with Washington law pertaining to:
 - Child support enforcement
 - Civil contempt proceedings
- **Must have excellent caseload management skills that are appropriate for a caseload of the size anticipated by this RFQ;**
- **Either currently insured or able to procure insurance meeting following parameters:**
 - **Malpractice insurance in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence, \$1 million general aggregate and a deductible of no less than \$10,000**
 - **Commercial general liability insurance in the amount of \$1 million per occurrence, \$2 million general aggregate**
- **Demonstrated commitment to public defense and service to indigent clients;**
- **Willingness and ability to meet with appointed clients (including clients incarcerated in the Benton County jail) within 72 hours of appointment;**

How to Apply

All applicants must follow these specific instructions to apply for contract award. Applicants who do not follow instructions may be, at the County's specific and sole discretion, disqualified for contract award.

Send a cover letter and resume to the Office of Public Defense at:

Attn: Eric Hsu, Public Defense Manager
Benton County Office of Public Defense
7122 W Okanogan Pl, Bldg A
Kennewick WA, 99336

Email applications are encouraged and may be sent to: OPD@co.benton.wa.us

Applications must be received no later than November 17, 2017. However, Benton County reserves the right to review and evaluate applications as they are received and to award contracts whenever it sees fit including before the application deadline so early application is encouraged.