Public Defense Mitigation Specialist II

DEPARTMENT: DPD - Dept of Public Defense  
SALARY: $82,829.14 - $104,990.91 Annually  
LOCATION: Dexter Horton Building - 710 Second Avenue #200, Seattle  
JOB TYPE: Multiple job types-career service and/or temp  
CLOSING DATE: 03/04/21 11:59 PM

SUMMARY:

The Department of Public Defense (DPD) provides high-quality legal representation to indigent clients. DPD practices in several areas, including felonies, misdemeanors, juvenile defense, family defense (dependency cases), involuntary commitment (mental illness), sex offender commitment, and contempt of court. DPD also works to address racial disproportionality in the criminal legal system, the collateral consequences of system involvement, and other structural and systemic issues that undermine the rights of our clients. We employ not only attorneys, but also skilled investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, and other support staff.

The Public Defense Mitigation Specialist II assists attorneys in developing defense strategies by providing advice and recommendations to attorneys; they assess clients and their families, participate in case strategy and planning, and present relevant diagnostic social service needs of clients, particularly as it pertains to establishing the best possible legal defense and/or outcome, and coordinate and refer clients to relevant social services.

To learn more about DPD, please visit our website at: http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/public-defense.aspx

Who May Apply: This recruitment is open to the general public and may be used to fill full-time current and/or future career service and/or term-limited temporary positions in any of the Department's four divisions. DPD also intends to generate an eligibility pool for future vacancies in career service and temporary positions over the next six months.

Note: Special duty opportunities are open only to current King County career service employees who have completed their initial probation. Special duty applicants must have approval from their current supervisor to accept an assignment.

Pay Upon Special Duty Placement: Current employees selected for special duty will be compensated based upon the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement or Master Labor Agreement for their base assignment.

DPD Ethical Walls Policies and Procedures will apply to applicants, such that if you work or have worked for one of DPD's divisions, you may be ineligible for this position.

Work Locations: Positions may be assigned to work at any of the following locations:
  • Dexter Horton Building, 710 Second Avenue, Seattle;
  • Jefferson Street Building, 1401 East Jefferson, Seattle;
  • Meeker Street Building, 420 West Harrison Street, Kent.
Rotation of staff practice area and/or work location occurs based on business need. Currently, due to the pandemic, most work is being done remotely.

We anticipate interviews taking place in mid- to late-March with a desired start date of late-April.

**Selection Process:** Applications will be reviewed and screened for clarity, completeness, and competitiveness. Applicants may be required to demonstrate their qualifications at the time of the interview and/or skills assessment. All materials will be evaluated for spelling, grammar, and punctuation usage. Qualified and competitive candidates may be asked to participate in a series of interviews for these positions.

For more information, or if you have questions about this position or process, please contact:

Cassandra Montgomery  
HR Analyst, DPD  
Cassandra.Montgomery@kingcounty.gov (preferred)

**JOB DUTIES:**

- Perform assessments, make diagnoses regarding mental illness or addictions, conduct interviews to collect information, and gather records for mitigation/competency. Prepare comprehensive psychosocial histories as needed.
- Provide testimony regarding mental health status, competence, or developmental issues.
- Provide social services information/education to attorneys and clients. Coordinate, refer, and monitor relevant social services for clients.
- Prepare and present accurate case information, and persuasive mitigation reports.
- Advocate for clients in the criminal justice system by investigating, developing, and presenting information that supports an alternative sentencing or dispositional plan. Similarly, advocate for clients in the legal system who are responding to a dependency petition, Sexual Offender Commitment petition, and other proceedings affecting the client's liberty, or other constitutionally protected interest.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

**EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS:**

- Master's degree in Social Work or a related behavioral science field. Criminal defense experience or familiarity with the populations that DPD serves is required. This education and experience should demonstrate an ability to work with clients who may be under pressure and in stress, helping them to navigate complex bureaucracies and access the assistance they need.
- Demonstrated ability to keep up to date with changing work and practices in the social work/mitigation specialist field and to ensure compliance with the latest laws, regulations and techniques to support our clients.
- Knowledge of the role of the attorney-mitigation specialist relationship and familiarity with the Washington State Bar Association Rules of Professional Responsibility and other ethical standards which govern Mitigation Specialists. This is necessary to support ethical and fair representation for each and every client we serve.
- Knowledge of principles, methods and techniques of social services, including case management, assessment, coordination/referrals, research, mediation, report writing, and oral communications. This is vital to ensure accuracy, effective service delivery, and legal compliance.
- Knowledge of the use of mitigation in criminal justice cases, to secure the best outcomes for those we serve.
• Knowledge of criteria for reliable biopsychosocial assessment, to assure that those we
serve receive appropriate assessment and subsequent care and to improve a client’s
cognition regarding their circumstances.
• Skill in handling confidential information to safeguard client privacy and identity.
• Skill in identifying potential ethical issues and seeking advice/counsel when ethical issues
arise or require clarification, to guarantee ethical and fair representation for each and every
client we serve.
• Skill in preparing detailed narrative reports, correspondence and other written materials to
actively and progressively support a positive narrative and outcome for those we serve.
• Skill in using office software programs including word processing, spreadsheet, database
and email.
• Ability to testify effectively at trial, sentencing or other hearings to promote positive
representation, and garner best outcomes for those we serve.
• Ability to communicate effectively and professionally, in person and in writing, to represent
our clients in the best possible light.
• Ability to work calmly and respond courteously when in stressful situations and to
demonstrate confident and professional conduct.
• Skill in working with a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds to effectively serve
vulnerable clients from all walks of life.
• Regular, reliable and predictable attendance to support timeliness and follow-through on
legal items and scheduling affecting our clients.
• Valid Washington State Driver’s License or the ability to travel reasonably quickly to multiple
locations, in order to serve our clients regardless of their location.
• Must be at least twenty-one years of age in order to enter facilities where our clients are
being held.

Desired Qualifications:
• Valid Washington State Social Work or Mental Health License.

An offer of employment will be contingent on the success of:
• Successful completion of references.
• Passing a Washington State Patrol Background check.
• Passing security clearance and/or background check to secure access to correctional
facilities.
• Successfully passing a conflicts check.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Special note regarding COVID-19: DPD is following Public Health and CDC guidance in regards
to social distancing. Interviews for this position will be conducted remotely. Successful candidates
may be required to telecommute and appear in court, the jail, or other areas as directed during the
County's pandemic response.

Work Schedule: The normal work schedule is Monday through Friday, with some night and
weekend work. This position is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act and is not eligible for
overtime.

Where to Apply: Interested individuals should complete an online King County application,
resume, cover letter of interest and a short, self-authored writing sample (in .doc, .docx. or .pdf
format). The letter of interest should describe how you meet the qualifications of the position. You
can find the online application at: http://www.kingcounty.gov/audience/employees/careers.aspx

All questions on the electronic form must be completed; do not type "see resume."

Applicants may be required to demonstrate their qualifications at the time of the interview and/or
skills assessment.

Union membership: Positions in this classification are recognized by Service Employees
International Union, Local 925.

WORKING FOR KING COUNTY:

Forbes recently named King County as one of Washington State's best employers.

Together, with leadership and our employees, we're changing the way government delivers service and winning national recognition as a model of excellence. Are you ready to make a difference? [Come join the team](#) dedicated to serving one of the nation's best places to live, work and play.

Guided by our "True North", we are making King County a welcoming community where every person can thrive. We value diversity, inclusion and belonging in our workplace and workforce. To reach this goal we are committed to workforce equity. Equitable recruiting, support, and retention is how we will obtain the highest quality workforce in our region; a workforce that shares and will help advance our guiding principles--we are one team; we solve problems; we focus on the customer; we drive for results; we are racially just; we respect all people; we lead the way; and we are responsible stewards. We encourage people of all backgrounds and identities to apply, including Native American and people of color, immigrants, refugees, women, LGBTQ+, people living with disabilities, and veterans.

King County is an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Employer

No person is unlawfully excluded from employment opportunities based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy), age, genetic information, disability, veteran status, or other protected class. Our EEO policy applies to all employment actions, including but not limited to recruitment, hiring, selection for training, promotion, transfer, demotion, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation.

To Apply

If you are interested in pursuing this position, please follow the application instructions carefully. If you need this announcement in an alternate language or format, would like to request accommodation or assistance in the application or assessment process or if you have questions please contact your recruiter listed on this job announcement.

King County Administration Bldg.  
500 4th Ave. Rm. 553  
Seattle, WA 98104  
206-477-3404

[irma.vanbuskirk@kingcounty.gov](mailto:irma.vanbuskirk@kingcounty.gov)

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Public Defense Mitigation Specialist II Supplemental Questionnaire

* 1. Are you a current and/or former employee of the Department of Public Defense?
   □ Yes □ No

* 2. If yes to the above, in which division(s)? Otherwise, please indicate N/A.
   □ Associated Counsel for the Accused
   □ The Defender Association
   □ Northwest Defenders
   □ Society of Counsel Representing the Accused Persons
* 3. If you responded with yes to question #1 and #2, please provide position title(s) and associated dates of the position(s). Otherwise, please indicate N/A.

* 4. Which best describes your highest level of education?
   - No GED or high school degree
   - General Education Degree
   - High school
   - Some college
   - Associate's or technical degree
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - PhD
   - JD
   - Other advanced degree

* 5. If you answered yes in the prior question to a higher education degree, in what field is your degree? Otherwise, please indicate N/A.

* 6. How many years of criminal defense experience do you have?
   - No experience
   - Less than one year
   - One year
   - More than one year

* 7. How many years of familiarity with the populations that DPD serves do you have?
   - No experience
   - Less than one year
   - One year
   - More than one year

* 8. Are you applying to this position as an eligible Current or Previous King County Employee Priority Placement Program Participant And Is this position the same or lower percentage of full-time when compared to the position held at the point of the notification of layoff AND Do you possess the skills and abilities to qualify for this position?
   - Yes, I was given a layoff notice from my role at King County AND I am within two years of the effective date of my layoff. AND The position I was laid off from was the same or a higher percentage of FT status when compared to this one.
   - No.

9. If you answered yes to the question above and you are applying for this position as a Priority Placement Participant, to be considered, you must provide the following three pieces of information in the space provided: 1. The title you held when you received your layoff notice 2. The department you worked in 3. The effective date of your layoff

* Required Question