



**Office of the Public Defender
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

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EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Assistant Public Defender

The Office of the Public Defender has an opening for an Assistant Public Defender. The position requires representing a culturally diverse population accused of traffic offenses, probation violations, misdemeanors and felonies in Superior Court as well as writing and arguing appeals in the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI), Supreme Court.

The applicant must possess a J.D. degree from an ABA accredited law school and be admitted to practice law in a state or territory in good standing such that they are eligible for a temporary admittance to the CNMI Bar Association without having to take the local bar exam. Experience is preferred but demonstrated writing skills and an enthusiastic attitude and ability to learn is just as valuable. This position will focus on bench trials with an extensive motions practice with some appellate practice and jury trials. We also have a drug court and a mental health court program to which one attorney is assigned. The initial contract is for two years which is renewable.

Our body of law is still growing and there are areas not yet settled. This can be an interesting and rewarding life style and practice for the right person with an interest in more writing than most trial public defender offices.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Handle all aspects of criminal defense with an emphasis on bench trials in misdemeanor, motions practice and some jury trials in felony and possible writing and arguing appeals.
 - Represent clients at preliminary matters such as bail hearings, preliminary hearings, and arraignments.
 - Prepare and argue pretrial motions such as suppression and evidentiary motions as well as post-conviction motions.
 - Represent clients at status conferences, change of plea hearings, trials and sentencing hearings.
 - Conduct investigations and interview witnesses.
 - Give legal advice to clients.
 - Negotiate with opposing counsel.

- Writing and arguing appeals in the CNMI Supreme court.

Salary: \$65,000.

Benefits: The office will pay round trip relocation expenses. Group health and life insurance is offered as well as 14 annual paid holidays and paid leave at an accrued rate of one day per two week pay period (about five weeks a year).

Saipan has a reasonable cost of living, relatively low taxes, and a beautiful tropical environment.

Location:

The office is located on Saipan in the CNMI, 125 miles north of Guam. The population is about 55,000 for all the islands in the chain. Saipan is the biggest and most populated with about 45,000.

Saipan, as well as all of the CNMI, is a beautiful tropical island. The largest of the three main islands, it is about 15 miles long and 5 miles wide with lots of outdoor activities such as world class golf, snorkeling, scuba diving and fishing. There are several local sporting events such as golf tournaments, triathlons, on and off-road bike and foot races, and swimming events.

There is a diverse population with residence from throughout Asia and the Pacific as well as the indigenous Carolinians and Chamorro. It is hot and wet in the summer and fairly dry and pleasant in the winter. There is one small underfunded public hospital and a few private clinics. There are travel opportunities to the other islands in the chain and its proximity to Asia and other Pacific Islands allows for travel opportunities.

The Office:

We are a 5-lawyer office with a support staff of an office manager, a legal assistant and an investigator. The budget is limited. We do a lot of our own investigation. Challenging the constitutionality of police actions and local statutes is integral to our practice and an evolving part of the law. We have our own cases but often need to cover court hearings for each other. We are a small office and need to support each other and cover cases and assignments for each other but each lawyer has autonomy to work their cases.

The Public Defender (PD) serves all of the CNMI with cases pending on all three of the populated islands; Saipan, Rota and Tinian. So we may have to travel to Rota or Tinian to handle cases when Zoom is not viable. We often need to use translators as many clients do not speak English. We are a friendly crew and look forward to welcoming a creative and energetic colleague.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume and two writing samples to the above address or email Doug Hartig at hartig.pdo@gmail.com