

## **INVESTIGATIVE ASSISTANT (PUBLIC DEFENDER) (SPANISH-SPEAKING)**

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** The work involves the responsibility for providing support to attorneys in the Office of the Public Defender, including clerical work and direct interaction with clients and related individuals primarily through taking intake interviews. An incumbent in this position must possess a speaking and reading ability in Spanish at a fluency level indicated in the Note below. The work may also require an individual to work outside of normal working hours, including evenings and weekends, as required. The work is performed under the direct supervision of a higher-level attorney or the Public Defender or his/her designee. Does related work as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

Conducts routine intake interviews with clients and related individuals in order to gather basic information concerning their legal matter and to determine eligibility for services, and records detailed notes accordingly;

Responds to clients about information obtained during the interview process either by telephone, email or letter;

Reviews and translates discoverable materials, such as videos and other evidence from Spanish to English and vice versa;

Organizes and maintains office files and records;

Takes and translates depositions from Spanish to English and vice versa;

Assists Senior Confidential Investigators with serving subpoenas or other legal documents;

Uses computer applications or other automated systems such as word processing, maintaining calendars, database software, etc.;

Performs a variety of special clerical assignments, as necessary.

### **FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Good knowledge of office procedures and practices; good knowledge of law office routines\*; good knowledge of basic legal terminology\*; ability to complete a variety of documents and forms; ability to conduct basic interviews in order to gather basic information; ability to maintain office files and records; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; ability to establish and maintain cooperative relationships with others; ability to use computer applications and other automated systems (e.g., spreadsheets, word processing, e-mail, database software); ability to speak, read and understand colloquial Spanish and to translate into acceptable English; awareness, knowledge and understanding of Hispanic culture and mores.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Graduation from high school or possession of an equivalency diploma and four (4) years of office clerical or business experience, at least two (2) years of which must have involved direct public contact\*\*.

### **NOTES:**

1. An Associate's degree (minimum of sixty (60) college credits) or higher may be substituted for the office clerical or business experience on a year-for-year basis, up to four (4) years.

(over)

2. Incumbents are expected to possess a Level II proficiency in Spanish (as defined by the Examinations Division of the State of New York Department of Civil Service) which requires that the incumbent: be able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional topics not requiring specialized vocabulary (e.g. technical engineering, medicine, etc.); can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence in general terms with reasonable ease; possesses adequate comprehension to normal rate of speech; has good control of grammar and errors do not interfere with understanding; can read with understanding standard newspaper, correspondence and official documents.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:** Possession of a valid driver's license or access to transportation to meet field work requirements in a timely and efficient manner.

\*To be demonstrated during the probationary period.

\*\*Public contact shall be defined as direct contact (i.e., in-person or telephone interactions) with clients, customers or members of the public that involves persuasion, negotiation, counseling, gathering, disseminating, or clarifying information, and inspection activities that include contact with individuals, or similar activities. The nature of the contact is such that it requires judgment and independent thinking on the part of the individual in dealing with or responding to another person.