

Wanted: Lawyers to Fight for Justice in Houston

Attorneys are needed for employment in the Harris County Public Defender's Office (HCPD), in Houston, Texas. Qualifications are a Texas law license upon employment and a commitment to zealous representation in the criminal legal system. Please follow Harris County's application procedure, [here](#).

HCPD was established 10 years ago. Since then, more of HCPD clients who were eligible for prison avoided a criminal record than clients of other local lawyers. Clients of HCPD were more likely to be "no billed" by grand juries or have their cases dismissed, than clients of private appointed counsel. Lawyers at HCPD went to trial in felonies more frequently than other appointed or hired lawyers and achieved a higher percentage of acquittals than either. HCPD was much more successful in reversing or reforming cases in the Texas appellate courts than other lawyers. Dismissal rates for HCPD mental health clients tripled over the last six years.

Despite that record, for its first eight years there was little growth of HCPD. The office continued to handle less than 10 percent of all court appointments. In 2018, elections changed the composition of the county's governing body. The new leadership supported HCPD's expansion. The office doubled in size. A proposal by an independent county agency now calls for doubling the office again within two years and to take 50 percent of all court appointments.

There are many reasons to work at HCPD. The office is on the cutting edge of client-centered holistic practice with ample support from investigators, social workers, advocates, peer counselors and administrative support. Defenders have pay parity with prosecutors at very competitive rates. Workloads are carefully controlled to allow time for zealous advocacy. Resources and experts are based on need, not merely cost.

Harris County is the nation's third largest county. At 1,777 square miles, it is bigger than Rhode Island. Houston is America's fourth largest city and its most ethnically diverse. It is on the same meridian as Cairo, New Delhi and Shanghai, and attracts immigrants from all over the world. Called "America's next food capital," for its restaurants, the city hosts professional teams – Texans, Rockets, Astros, Dynamo and Dash – and major schools – Rice University, University of Houston and Texas Southern University. There are three accredited law schools here.

Houston is the second-most affordable housing market of all top 20 metro areas in the United States. The city spawned such musicians as Beyonce, Lyle Lovett, Chamillionaire and ZZ Top. There are fine arts, opera, symphony and ballet that rival other major cities worldwide.

Rice University's 39th Annual Kinder Houston Area Survey found that over the last decade Houstonians have come to fear crime less and trust others more. The survey also found 77 percent agree that refugees fleeing danger are welcome in Houston. The county's vibrance is exemplified by its leader, County Judge Lina Hidalgo, a 29-year-old naturalized U.S. Citizen, born in Colombia and trained at Stanford University.