

PUEBLO OF LAGUNA
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT NO. 2026-14

OPEN TO IN-HOUSE & EXTERNAL APPLICANTS

POSITION:	Public Defender
OPENING DATE:	January 30, 2026
CLOSING DATE:	February 6, 2026
DEPARTMENT:	Government Affairs Office
SALARY RANGE:	E - 17; \$78,814 - \$131,357

Position Summary:

Under administrative direction of the Government Affairs Director, the Public Defender represents indigent clients accused of violating ordinances of the Pueblo of Laguna. Ensures efficient and effective legal advocacy. Consistently applies the Pueblo's Core Values in support of Workforce Excellence. Maintains confidentiality of all privileged information.

This list of duties and responsibilities is illustrative only of the tasks performed by this position and is not all-inclusive.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities:

- Represents indigent individuals in the Pueblo Court accused of violating the Pueblo's ordinances.
- Performs necessary tasks to provide competent advocacy including arrangements for setting of bail and posting of bond, pretrial conferences, representation in court appearances, and post-trial representation.
- Ensures that the civil rights of clients charged with violations of the Pueblo's codes and/or ordinances are competently protected.
- Utilizes a plea bargain process that promotes the interests of the accused. Ensures a balanced criminal justice system.
- Maintains necessary contact with clients to apprise of court hearings, case developments, and client obligations.
- Interviews clients, gathers evidence, and analyzes pertinent information to formulate and prepare for legal representation.
- Conducts research, interviews clients and witnesses, and develops strategy, arguments and testimony in preparation for presentation of case and in preparation for hearings and/or trial.
- Prepares witnesses for depositions and trial.
- Prepares pleadings, motions, legal briefs, orders, and appellate documents.
- Works with the Court Prosecutor, Probation Officers, other relevant personnel or entities to determine/negotiate appropriate recommendations for case resolution, sentences, and referrals to appropriate services.
- Reviews codes and/or ordinances; recommends amendments to the GAO Director for action by Pueblo Legislative Committees.
- Maintains appropriate documentation as required. Ensures the confidentiality of client information.
- Develops and maintains solid relationships with entities of common interest, including the Federal Public Defender Office, the New Mexico Public Defender Department, and other internal and external programs.
- Assists GAO Director in the development and management of annual budget, including operational plans and objectives.
- Assists GAO Director in management of relevant grants, contracts, and/or other funding sources; develops required narrative and statistical reports.
- Researches additional funding opportunities and available grant monies for continuation and expansion of program services.
- Evaluates and assesses program processes and procedures; offers/recommends changes; ensures the implementation of revisions.
- Provides direct oversight and supervision to staff.
- Evaluates staff and contractor performance in a timely manner. Promotes self-responsibility and accountability.
- Maintains professional licensure and gains technical knowledge by conducting research, reviewing case histories and rulings, attending relevant training and workshops, and establishing networks with like programs.
- Assists the Pueblo's Emergency Management Program and its response to public emergency incidents.
- Complies with standards of conduct applicable to licensure and profession.
- Contributes to a team effort and accomplishes related results as required.
- Performs other duties as required.

Minimum Qualifications:

- Juris Doctorate from an accredited law school required.
- Two (2) or more years work experience in the practice of criminal law required.
- Member in good standing with the New Mexico State Bar or licensed in any other state and by New Mexico within one (1) year of hiring required.
- FEMA/ICS 100, 200, 700, 800 Certifications preferred; must obtain within six (6) months of hire.
- Fluency in the Laguna language preferred.

Background Investigation Requirements:

The Pueblo of Laguna has a Suitability Policy for background investigation processes. Every position in the government operation is reviewed and designated at one of three risk levels. The determination is commensurate with public trust responsibilities and attributes of the position which includes job duties. The Public Defender is designated as a High-Risk Public Trust (HRPT) position.

Type of Background Check	Required
Pre-Employment Drug Screening	X
Background Investigation (Criminal Check, Sex Offender Check, Social Security Trace, Driving Record, Civil Court Check – if applicable, Tribal Criminal Check – if applicable)	X
Employment Verification, Education / License Verification, Personal Reference Verification	X
Fingerprint Verification	X
Must Be Able to Drive a Pueblo Issued Vehicle	X
Other: Professional Services Employment Agreement	X

Knowledge, Abilities, Skills, and Certifications:

- Knowledge of traditional form of government, pueblo customs, and traditions.
- Knowledge of applicable laws, regulations, and requirements, including relevant Chapters of U.S. Code, Title 25 – Indians, the Pueblo of Laguna Constitution, Codes, and Ordinances.
- Knowledge of standards of conduct applicable to licensure and profession.
- Knowledge of proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and legal terminology.
- Knowledge of courtroom procedures and processes.
- Knowledge of basic FEMA policies, regulations, and processes regarding emergency incident response and management.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing.
- Ability to interact and establish positive working relationships with individuals of varying social and cultural backgrounds.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality, to demonstrate high moral character and self-responsibility.
- Ability to work independently and meet strict time lines.
- Ability to analyze situations, make solid decisions and exercise independent judgement.
- Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
- Ability to prepare comprehensive reports and presents accurate information.
- Ability to interpret and implement applicable laws, regulations, and requirements.
- Ability and skill to be persuasive and tactful in controversial situations.
- Skill in preparing, reviewing, analyzing and interpreting complex legal documents and publications.
- Skill in working effectively under pressure.
- Skill in gathering, analyzing, and organizing information.
- Skill in preparing, reviewing, and analyzing operational and financial reports.
- Skill in providing leadership to, supervising, training, and evaluating assigned staff.
- Skill in computer use, including Word, Excel, Outlook, and software unique to program.

Physical Demands:

While performing the duties of this job, the employee regularly is required to stand; sit; use hands and fingers to handle or feel; and talk or hear. The employee frequently is required to walk; and reach with hands and arms. The employee occasionally is required to climb or balance; and stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds.

Work Environment:

Work is performed in an office or courtroom setting with a moderate noise level. Evening and/or weekend work is rarely required; is on call for emergencies. There is regular interaction with the public. Exposure to graphic or sensitive subject matter is present. Tight time constraints and multiple demands from several people are common. Travel is required for training, meetings, and other events.

Application Instructions:

- Go to www.lagunapueblo-nsn.gov and click on Employment Opportunities for application instructions and application form. **Read instructions prior to completing application form; incomplete applications will not be considered.** Resumes are encouraged but not in lieu of a complete application form.
- All hand delivered documents must be received by the Human Resources Office no later than 4:30 pm (MDT) on the closing date. All electronically mailed documents must be received by the Human Resources Office no later than 11:59pm (MDT) on the closing date.
- Application packets may be submitted by one of the following methods:
 1. E-mail to poemployment@pol-nsn.gov;
 2. Mail to Pueblo of Laguna Human Resources; P.O. Box 194; Laguna, NM 87026
 3. Deliver to the Human Resources Office, 23 Rio San Jose Rd; Laguna, NM 87026
 4. Fax to (505) 552-9675
- For more information, contact HR at (505) 552-5252 or by e-mail at the above address.

LAGUNA TRIBAL MEMBER PREFERENCE APPLIES