



QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE SERVING AS PUBLIC DEFENSE LEADERSHIP

*a position paper developed by the NAPD Systems Builders Committee;
approved by the NAPD Steering Committee on December 21, 2017*

Members of the selecting or appointing authority should select a lawyer who has professional, management, leadership, trial, appellate, and negotiation skills and who will lead by setting a professional example.

The person selected should:

- Be committed to public defense and the principles that underlie the right to effective assistance of counsel (Sixth Amendment principles) as well as the NAPD Foundational Principles.
- Have an understanding of client-centered representation principles and the values, structures and processes necessary to implement those principles under the particular circumstances presented by the defender's office.
- Have a vision for what the office should seek to achieve consistent with client-centered representation.
- Be a steward of the office consistent with Sixth Amendment principles.

As a steward of the Sixth Amendment, the person selected should:

- Have an appropriate philosophy and the skills to ensure that the work is done in a highly professional and ethical manner (and is not just interested in a job).
- Create an organizational structure that permits delegation and accountability and have the ability and willingness to delegate; ensure that all staff and job descriptions align with these values.
- Have knowledge of budgets and the budgetary process, including: how does it work, what are budgetary priorities, and understanding that a budget is a moral and political statement of organizational priorities (not just numbers).
- Have the requisite interpersonal and political skills.
- Ensure that all staff are educated, trained and mentored as professionals and leaders.
- Be committed to diversity, including recruiting a diverse work force.
- Be committed to maintaining the professional independence of the office, specifically having exhibited leadership in encountering issues with the political arena, especially the strength and skills to work with and stand up to other system stakeholders to benefit the clients, staff and the office.
- Be an effective communicator (externally and internally) with the ability and willingness to communicate values, vision, and day-to-day issues effectively via: public speaking, media and public relations; testifying before committees; lobbying for funding and staff; and, lobbying for legislation designed to make the clients' lives better, including keeping them out of the criminal justice system (e.g., prevention and treatment) and opposing those issues that are detrimental to the clients, staff and the office.