



Supreme Court of Illinois

September 9, 2026

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR FIRST STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER

The Illinois Supreme Court invites applications from individuals interested in serving as the initial Illinois State Public Defender, a new chief executive role overseeing an independent agency within the Judicial Branch. In this role, the selected individual will be the State's leading advocate for Illinois' public defenders and for the constitutional rights of people charged with offenses and represented by Illinois' public defense system. The State Public Defender will also establish policies, practices, resources, and reforms necessary to ensure effective and meaningful representation of defendants across Illinois.

Applications will be accepted beginning today, **Wednesday, September 9, 2026**. The deadline for submission is **Friday, October 9, 2026**. Submitted applications will be reviewed prior to selecting finalists, after which the Illinois Supreme Court will appoint an initial State Public Defender for a two-year term beginning January 1, 2027.

The State Public Defender will be responsible for establishing, supervising, and administering a statewide public defense system that ensures constitutionally required legal representation for indigent persons in criminal, juvenile delinquency, and dependency matters. The individual hired will oversee the buildout of the office, the installation of the infrastructure, the implementation of statutory guidelines, and will identify the funding sources, hire key leadership and locate and position regional offices. The State Public Defender must devote full time to the duties of the office and may not engage in the private practice of law. The annual salary of \$218,400 is established by statute.

The minimum qualifications for the position are being a licensed attorney in good standing in Illinois, at least 5 years of licensed practice (Illinois or another state), evidence of administrative and supervisory experience, evidence of experience representing persons accused of crime, and evidence of dedication to high-quality indigent defense and a plan to improve statewide defense services.

A full description of the position as well as instructions for submitting your application can be found [here](#).

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: James Brunner, Public Information Officer of the Illinois Supreme Court at 217.208.3354 or jbrunner@illinoiscourts.gov)