



Date: December 29, 2020

Subject: Procedure for Selecting a Public Defender Upon Completion of the Statutory Term

Position Profile

The Office of the Cook County Public Defender is a large and complex office with a budget of more than \$80,000,000. The office employs four hundred and ninety-five attorneys, sixty-one investigators, and one hundred and thirty-five social workers, clerical staff, and other support staff. The office represents both juveniles and adults at different courthouses located throughout the county. Specialized units include the Homicide Task Force and the Multiple Defendants Division. The office has continued to undertake new challenges including representation at police stations and in immigration proceedings.

Procedure

The appointment of the Cook County Public Defender is made by the Cook County Board President subject to the advice and consent of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. The term of the current Public Defender expires on March 31, 2021. In order to complete an effective and comprehensive review and selection or re-appointment of a Public Defender in a timely manner, the President is seeking candidates with qualifications enumerated under Illinois Statute 55 ILCS 5/3-4004.2. The effective start date of the new or extended term will be April 1, 2021.

The President is seeking a highly qualified individual whose practice of law has clearly demonstrated experience in the representation of persons accused of crime, and who can effectively lead a large staff, which includes members of several collective bargaining units. The Public Defender is also called on to participate fully in the on-going reform of the Cook County criminal justice system as a principal stakeholder, operating on par with separately elected officials.

Interested individuals who met the qualifications may send in their candidate materials by the required deadline of January 22, 2021. In addition, the President will ask local law schools, bar associations and a number of civic and legal organizations to submit individuals for consideration. A selection committee of community leaders with a range of experience and qualifications has been appointed to interview qualified candidates. Through an appropriate public process, qualifying questions will be provided to the selection committee that reflect community concerns. The selection committee will be required to submit up to three candidates to the President for her consideration.

The President intends to select one of the three candidates forwarded to her. The President's recommended candidate will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners in March of 2021 for advice and consent. It is anticipated that the Public Defender will be confirmed in office in April of 2021.

Calendar

December 29, 2020

Announcement of the Selection Committee; Letters requesting nominations to be disseminated

January 22, 2021

Final date for the receipt of candidate materials (cover letter, resumes)

February 1, 2021

Selection Committee begins interviews

February 26, 2021

Three candidates forwarded to the President

March 2021- April 2021

The President sends her final recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for advice and consent