

About the Program

Created through an act of the Georgia legislature and opened in 2005, The Northeastern Judicial Circuit Public Defender Office provides lawyers for people charged with crimes who cannot afford to pay for legal representation.

The office, which covers Hall and Dawson Counties, is comprised of 18 attorneys and 16 support staff and is jointly funded by Hall County, Dawson County and the State of Georgia. Hall County's office employs the majority of staff, with 15 attorneys and 13 support staffers.



In Hall County, the office represents indigent clients accused of felony offenses, under age youth in juvenile court delinquency cases, and felony probationers charged with violating probation. The Dawson County office represents indigent clients in felony and misdemeanor cases. In Hall County, the office opens an estimated 1,300 new felony cases and 1,400 probation cases annually.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit Public Defender is to ensure, independently of political considerations or private interests, that each client whose cause has been entrusted to a circuit public defender receives zealous, adequate, effective, timely, and ethical legal representation, consistent with the guarantees of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, the Constitution of the United States and the mandates of the Georgia Indigent Defense Act of 2003; to provide all such legal services in a cost efficient manner; and to conduct that representation in such a way that the criminal justice system operates effectively to achieve justice.

Staff Contacts

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Circuit Public Defender
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Frequently Asked Questions

Related Questions

Can I choose which lawyer represents me?

No. Your case is assigned to a judge, which typically determines which attorney will oversee your case.

Can I get a public defender for my state court misdemeanor case?

In Hall County, the office of the public defender only represents clients in Superior Court charged with felonies. Hall County State Court provides indigent defendants with court-appointed attorneys not affiliated with the office of the public defender. Applicants for State Court-appointed lawyers must apply through the [Northeastern Judicial Circuit Indigent Defense Office](#). In Dawson County, the public defender's office represents indigent defendants in misdemeanor and felony cases.

Can I get legal advice about my DFCS case, divorce, lawsuit, etc.?

The office of the public defender only provides representation for criminal cases. In Juvenile Deprivation cases, [Northeastern Judicial Circuit Indigent Defense Office](#) provides appointed counsel. The [Family Law Information Center](#) located at the Hall County Courthouse provides assistance in divorces for both Hall and Dawson residents and the [Georgia Legal Services Program](#) in Gainesville provides counsel in other civil matters.

Do public defenders provide the same quality of representation as private lawyers/attorneys?

Absolutely. The attorneys in the office of the public defender's office are all licensed by the State Bar of Georgia and hold law degrees from some of the more rigorous and demanding law schools in the country. Our lawyers have extensive trial experience, with several having received statewide recognition for their work. The office of the public defender for the Northeastern Judicial Circuit has a reputation for attracting highly skilled lawyers and is selective in its hiring practices.

How do I get a public defender?

All potential clients in Hall County must apply in person for a public defender through the [Northeastern Judicial Circuit Indigent Defense Office](#), located at the Hall County Courthouse. Phone (770) 531-7087. Clients must meet certain poverty guidelines to qualify. In Dawson County, the Dawson County Public Defender's Office at the Dawson County Courthouse takes applications for potential clients.

I am a client of the public defender. How do I find out what's going on in my case?

Some cases can be resolved in a short time, but in other instances they may take longer to reach conclusion than our clients would prefer. Please keep in mind there are thousands of criminal cases on the dockets of the Superior Court. Your attorney or your attorney's investigator will contact you by phone or mail whenever there is new information about court appearances, plea offers or a possible trial.

I need treatment, not prison. Can you do this for me?

In some instances, alternative sentencing options such as residential substance abuse treatment, mental health care, etc., is appropriate and can be agreed upon by the parties in your case. It is by no means a guarantee, however. Each case must be evaluated based on the state's evidence, the client's past history, and the likelihood of success with an alternative sentence.

What are my chances?

This office does not provide mathematical odds at your chances of prevailing in a case, nor does it make promises or guarantees that a case will turn out a certain way. The only promise is to zealously and ethically represent you to the fullest extent.

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