



Seeking Felony Panel Attorneys for Operation Lone Star Cases

The State has arrested thousands of people allegedly found with undocumented migrants in their vehicles near the Texas-Mexico border under Operation Lone Star, Governor Abbott's border initiative. The State charges these individuals with the felony crime of human smuggling, a crime that now has a ten-year mandatory-minimum penalty. The Lone Star Defenders Office (LSDO)—the indigent defense hub responsible for appointing counsel to Operation Lone Star cases—is seeking attorneys to join our felony defense panel.

Panel Attorneys are independent contractors, not LSDO employees. Attorneys on the felony panel are on a rotation system and receive new cases one week per month, usually between 5 and 10 cases during that week. Most, though not all, of the cases are human-smuggling cases. Attorneys will represent individuals charged in Jim Hogg, Kinney, Val Verde, Zavala, Dimmit, or Maverick County. The counties involved are subject to change. Court proceedings are usually in-person. Attorneys must travel to the counties for these proceedings, typically three times per month. Detained clients can be visited by Zoom.

LSDO works closely with panel attorneys and provides them with client advocates, resource attorneys, interpreters, and investigators. LSDO's responsibilities include assignment of counsel, reviewing vouchers, providing training and resources, and monitoring quality of services rendered. For more information, visit www.olsdefense.org.

Ideal candidates are passionate about defense representation; can collaborate effectively with LSDO and other panel attorneys; and have strong organization skills to handle the large caseload. Most importantly, we are looking for people who can provide high quality, zealous representation and who care about their clients and want to do an excellent job. We expect our attorneys to conduct prompt initial visits and to maintain regular contact with their clients. We also expect attorneys to file motions and writs where appropriate.

Requirements & Expectations

- You must be licensed in Texas, and you cannot have received any public disciplinary action by any licensing authority within the last 5 years.
- You must have at least two years of experience practicing criminal law. Felony and trial experience is preferred. If you lack significant experience, LSDO may require an experienced attorney to co-counsel cases.
- You must attend all mandatory Operation Lone Star trainings hosted by LSDO and complete 8 hours of CLE in criminal law and procedure each year.
- You must commit to accepting new cases for at least 4 months.
- You must contemporaneously record time on LSDO's case management program.

Compensation

- We pay \$150 an hour for felony cases, regardless of degree of felony. For cases out of Maverick, Dimmit, and Zavala counties, we currently pay \$200 an hour.

To apply, complete the application available at www.olsdefense.org/get-involved