



PARTNER OFFICE PROFILE

SHELBY COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

MEMPHIS, TN

@DEFENDSHELBYCO



@DEFENDSHELBYCO



@DEFENDSHELBYCO



WWW.DEFENDSHELBYCO.ORG



of Gideon's Promise lawyers are in your office?

25

Are resources, such as availability of experts and investigative support, accessible to staff attorneys?

YES

What are the different units in your public defender office?

Our office has a misdemeanor trial division; a felony trial division; a juvenile defender unit; appellate division; special litigation team that also administers the Jericho Project; major cases team that handles capital cases; and a pre-entry/reentry unit. We also have investigators and social workers who work with our attorneys.

Does your public defender office have any formal community partnerships or special projects? If so, please describe the partnership, program, or project.

We administer the Jericho Project for our local criminal justice system. The Jericho Project is a jail diversion program for those charged with a criminal offense who have been diagnosed with a severe and persistent mental illness.

Popular attractions for attorneys to visit while in your city:

Memphis, Tennessee is known for its music scene, its history and of course, its barbecue. From the Stax Museum (Soul Music) to Graceland (Rock 'n Roll) to Beale St. (The Blues) and gospel, we are definitely a city that lives and breathes great music. The National Civil Rights Museum highlights our city's complex racial history and preserves one of the important historic sites of the civil rights movement, The Lorraine Motel where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was tragically assassinated.



STAX MUSEUM



BEALE STREET



THE LORRAINE MOTEL

101 MARIETTA ST. NW, SUITE 250 ATLANTA, GA 30303



@GIDEONSPROMISE



GIDEON'S PROMISE



@GIDEONS_PROMISE



PARTNER OFFICE PROFILE

SHELBY COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

MEMPHIS, TN

Is there anything that distinguishes the clients in your jurisdiction?

Our clients are predominately African-American. However, our county's population maintains significant ethnic diversity--including a sizeable population that does not speak English as their first language.

What makes practicing in your jurisdiction uniquely challenging?

We live in a county that has a high poverty rate; thereby, requiring greater resources to help our oftentimes generationally impoverished clients. Our system's heavy reliance on money bail exacerbates the disproportionate number of poor people who are ultimately crippled with the collateral consequences of prior criminal convictions. Too few people qualify under the law to have their criminal record expunged, and the procedure for restoring full rights of citizenship is complex and inaccessible for many.

Do you have to have any specific skills that are required in your office?

We are working to increase the number of social workers available to assist our clients. We also want to broaden our capacity to communicate with those whose primary language is not English. We especially need employees who speak Spanish fluently.



PHYLLIS ALUKO

FIRST FEMALE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER
SHELBY COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER

101 MARIETTA ST. NW, SUITE 250 ATLANTA, GA 30303



@GIDEONSPROMISE



GIDEON'S PROMISE



@GIDEONS_PROMISE