

Public Defender vs. Private Defense Lawyer

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The difference between a public defender and a criminal defense lawyer is important when considering your legal representation. Having an attorney on your side is imperative. You must be proactive after your arrest regardless of what kind of charges are filed against you.

The Public Defender

A public defender is a licensed attorney, assigned to represent people who are charged with a crime and who desire legal representation but who cannot afford to hire a privately retained attorney.

Different jurisdictions use different approaches to providing legal counsel for criminal defendants too poor to hire a private attorney. Under the federal system and most common among the states is through a publicly funded public defender office. Typically, these offices function as an agency of the federal, state or local government and as such, these attorneys are compensated as salaried government employees. This approach serves provides a substantial majority of the indigent criminal defense representation in the United States.

The Private Criminal Defense Lawyer

A criminal defense lawyer is a licensed attorney, usually hired to represented people who have been charged with a crime and desire legal representation. Criminal defense lawyers sell their services and offer the chance of having your case dismissed or your charges lessened.

The Difference

The main difference between the two is the caseload. Generally public defenders are unable to provide

undivided attention to their clients because they have an overwhelming caseload. Some public defenders have a caseload that can reach 200-300 cases per year.

Also, because public defenders function on limited budgets, you may not have access to all of the investigative resources and experts that private criminal defense lawyers have connections to.

Criminal defense lawyers make their clients a priority, and try to balance their personal needs with their obligations to their clients.

If you are accused of a crime, your freedom, your family, your reputation, your immigration status, and your job may be at stake. The outcome you receive in the criminal justice system depends upon the experience and knowledge of the [criminal defense attorney](#) you choose to represent you.

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