



WHO WE ARE

Serving all of Montgomery County, Neighborhood Defenders-Montgomery employs a unique approach to the constitutional mandate to provide quality representation to clients charged with criminal offenses that could deprive them of their liberty. Our defenders believe that public defense work must reach beyond the courthouse doors and into the lives of our clients by providing them with necessary services to break the cycle of re-offending.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You should make contact with our office as soon as possible. A lot of work can be done on your case before your next scheduled court date! In order to qualify for our services, you must meet our income guidelines and provide proof of your current income. If you have questions about what types of proof are required, please call our intake office at 240-773-9666.

We recognize that just being accused of a crime can cause stress on many areas of your life. Even if someone is never convicted, they may lose employment, benefits, housing or custody of a child. We are here to try to minimize the impact of your charges as much as possible. If you are interested in services outside of your case, let your interviewer know what assistance you are looking for. Areas that you may want to consider are:

Child Support, Child Custody issues, Criminal Record Expungement, Drug Treatment, Education, Employment, Housing, Immigration, Medical/Pharmacy Assistance, Mental Health Treatment, Seized Property, Social Security/Development Disabilities Benefits.



MONTGOMERY
office of the public defender



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Neighborhood Defenders-Montgomery
Office of the Public Defenders for the
State of Maryland, District 6

199 P East Montgomery Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

240-773-9601



KEY COMPONENTS

- **DEFENSE LAWYERS:** Neighborhood Defenders-Montgomery is staffed by more than thirty criminal defense lawyers who share a strong commitment to zealous representation of clients by providing superior representation to indigent defendants in criminal cases.
- **COLLABORATION:** Our defenders work within small practice groups or “teams” which includes, lawyers, social workers, interns, investigators, law clerks, social work interns and support staff. The team structures allows for a multi-disciplinary approach. Each team member contributes to assist the client in resolving problems that brought them into the system. The team is committed to finding treatment alternatives to incarceration. Written report and in-court advocacy are available to assist the client avoid incarceration whenever possible.

Defenders have established partnerships with the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, private law firms and other legal service providers to refer clients for representation not provided by our office.
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** Our lawyers, social workers, paralegal, interns and support staff identify and collaborate with social service agencies within the community to assist clients with a wide range of social and economic issues such as housing, public benefits, mental health treatment and addictions counseling. This expansion of advocacy helps the client deal with underlying issues that cause them to cycle through the criminal justice system. Once the need is identified, team members refer the client to the appropriate agency within the community to address the problem.
- **REENTRY:** The majority of clients who are incarcerated eventually return to their own community. These clients are often in need of critical services at this point in their lives to avoid returning to the system. As integral partners in the community re-



entry system, defenders and staff can, after assessment by our client-service professionals, refer clients for employment, housing, public benefits, social services, addictions assistance and a host of other services that are part of the reentry network. Advocacy by our defenders does not end at the jailhouse door but can and does extend beyond the termination of the criminal case.

- **EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY:** An educational advocacy attorney has been added to our juvenile team. Criminal and delinquency attorneys can refer clients who have educational issues. These primarily fall into three categories: The first category includes clients who are in school but experiencing problems. This typically involves getting clients tested for special education or making sure they are receiving appropriate services. The second group includes clients who are out of schools due to expulsion or suspension. This involves advocacy at expulsion hearings and follow-up once the client is returned to school. In the third category our attorney advocates for clients who are detained by attending special education meetings at juvenile and adult detention facilities. This program provides clients an opportunity to turn their contact with the court system into a positive experience by addressing educational issues they have been dealing with unsuccessfully for years.

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** Defenders and team members develop ties with schools, youth centers, community groups and other stakeholders to educate the public on issues of justice and fairness in our community
- **CIVIL LEGAL:** A client-services attorney has been added to assist the team of criminal defense attorneys and their clients in certain matters collaterally related to the underlying criminal offenses. The areas of civil legal assistance include, modification of child support for incarcerated individuals and expungements of criminal records. Failure to pay child support can result in suspension of driving privileges and the issuance of a contempt citation. Helping clients to avoid these barriers to a successful reentry into society is a critical piece of what we offer clients. A clean or less extensive record achieved through expungement could be of enormous benefit to the client who is looking for a job or housing. Attorneys can refer their clients for legal assistance in other areas including child visitation in protective order cases and property forfeiture in criminal cases. Advocating for clients in these areas, in conjunction with the superior advocacy clients receive from the criminal defense attorneys, provides clients with much-needed assistance in previously non-addressed areas of law.