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**FUNCTION OF OFFICE:**

The office of the Federal Public Defender is a criminal defense law firm; the Federal Public Defender is responsible for representing individuals charged with a federal crime if a federal judge or magistrate judge determines that the accused person is financially unable to obtain adequate representation and if the judge or magistrate judge assigns the case to the Federal Public Defender. Usually, the Federal Public Defender is appointed at the initial appearance before the magistrate judge. An appointment made by a magistrate judge remains in effect for any proceeding on that case in district court; if the defendant appeals, the appointment continues in effect for representation on appeal, through the United States Supreme Court. Most appeals are handled by the Houston Office. The Federal Public Defender has offices with resident staff in Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Houston, Laredo, and McAllen, Texas.