



The Federal Public Defender Western District of MI

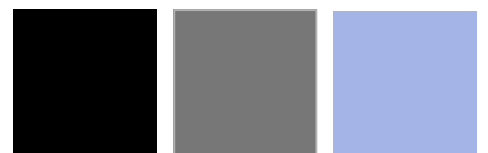
MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of the Federal Public Defender is to ensure each person charged with a federal crime in the Western District of Michigan equal access to justice regardless of economic condition, race, religion, or national origin. We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to providing each client a thorough, ethical, and vigorous defense and protecting the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution and laws of the United States.”

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS

The Federal Public Defender’s Office for the Western District of Michigan is a law office providing expert representation to individuals facing federal criminal charges who cannot afford to hire a lawyer. For more than fifteen years our office has represented thousands of clients. Our team of lawyers has more than 180 years combined experience practicing law in the federal courts. They are assisted by a staff of professionals committed to providing superior litigation support.

Geographically, we cover all of Michigan’s upper peninsula and the western half of the lower peninsula. Our main office is in Grand Rapids with a branch office in Marquette. Typically, we handle approximately 360 cases per year. Our clients face a wide variety of charges including drug offenses, gun charges, immigration/naturalization violations, bank robberies, counterfeiting, and fraud cases. We also represent clients against whom the Government is seeking the death penalty. We understand that facing criminal charges in federal court can be a confusing and even scary experience. We will work with you to help you through this difficult period. In the weeks ahead we will provide you additional information about the federal criminal process. We believe that being educated about the system will empower you and make it easier for you to communicate with your lawyer and work toward a resolution of your case.





IMPORTANT

Do

Ignore “jail house lawyers.” Some inmates in the county jails are not involved in the federal system, and have little or no knowledge about the federal judicial process. Even among federal prisoners false rumors circulate. Listen to your lawyer. Your defense team is the best source of information about your case. If these so-called jail house lawyers knew what they were talking about, why are they still sitting in jail?

Be open during visitation. Once you have been appointed counsel, your lawyer or an investigator from the office will speak to you. Due to the discovery rules in the federal criminal justice system, the prosecution is not required to provide the defense team with nearly as much evidence as is provided in the state system. It is therefore crucial that you be truthful with your defense team and provide them with as much information as you can. Take the time to think about potential witnesses, and their contact information, and have this information ready when your lawyer and the investigators speak with you.

Contact your lawyer. Our office will accept your collect calls, but please keep the following in mind when you call. First, do not abuse this courtesy. We ask that you call only when something important needs to be conveyed to us. Also, remember that because the jail records phone conversations, nothing having to do with the facts of your case or defense will be discussed. Second, if you call and the secretary does not accept your call, that means your lawyer is either out of the office or for some other reason is unable to take your call at that time.

Arrive for court appearances. The Western District has courts in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, and Marquette. If you are released on bond, it is critical that you show up on time for every court appearance and not violate any condition of your bond. Also keep in mind that you should dress appropriately; remember that every time you appear in court you are striving to make a good impression on the judge/jury. What is appropriate? No jeans. Absolutely no shorts. No bling. For men: dress pants and a button-down shirt. For women: dress pants or skirt or dress. Now is not the time to feel as though you need to make a fashion statement. Also, no cell phones in court. Finally, while in some cases it may be unavoidable, do not bring small children to court. If you cannot find a babysitter, advise your family to keep the children out of the court room. **Note:** Persons entering a federal building will be asked to produce proper identification.

REMINDERS

DO NOT

DO NOT discuss your case with anyone but your lawyer. Anything you tell your lawyer about your case is privileged information and is therefore confidential. Do not discuss your case with police, prosecutors, the U.S. Marshals or any other officer of the court. If anyone asks you questions, tell them you cannot answer without the presence of your lawyer. Also, do not ask them questions about your case. When you ask them questions the conversation often leads to the facts of your case. If you initiate a conversation that leads to admissions about your case, the statements can be used against you even if you have previously told the agents you did not want to talk to them. The law is complex in this area. The best course of action and our advice to you is quite frankly to keep quiet.

DO NOT discuss your case with other inmates. Do not speak to any other inmate about your case. Whether conversations are in English or another language, anything you say to other inmates can be used against you in court. All letters and phone calls in and out of the jail are reviewed by jail/prison personnel, so do not discuss your case with anyone through these means. The only persons with whom you should discuss your case are your lawyer and any of this office's investigators/assistants working on the case. Also, please keep in mind that in the federal system, a majority of defendants will at some point agree to "cooperate" with the government in exchange for a lighter sentence themselves. Especially for those of you who have been detained while your case is pending, be aware that your cell mates may be pumping you for information so that they can turn around and provide the information to the Government. This happens all the time.

DO NOT discuss the facts of your case with family. We are sure that you would not want to see a family member end up as a witness against you. Therefore, do not discuss the facts of your case with family members. This includes any phone conversations that you make from the jail or letters you may send to family or friends from the jail. **Your phone calls are being recorded and your mail is being monitored.**





IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Federal Public Defender's Office

616-742-7420 (Grand Rapids)
906-226-3050 (Marquette)

Your Lawyer's Name

Pre-trial Services Officer

Drug Testing Agency

Other Important Numbers



FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER, W.D. MI

Grand Rapids Office
The Trade Center Building
50 Louis NW, Suite 300
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Telephone: 616-742-7420
Fax: 616-742-7430

Marquette Office
iEconomy Building
100 N. Front St., Suite 104
Marquette, MI 49855
Telephone: 906-226-3050
Fax: 906-226-3499