



# United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

Office of the Circuit Executive · 95 7th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 · (415) 355-8800 · [mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov](mailto:mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov)

## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Katherine Rodriguez  
[mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov](mailto:mediarelease@ce9.uscourts.gov)

## **Fidel Cassino-DuCloux Appointed as New Federal Public Defender for District of Oregon**

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have selected Fidel Cassino-DuCloux as the next federal public defender for the District of Oregon. He succeeds Lisa Hay, who retired on June 30, 2023, after 25 years with the Oregon federal public defender office. Cassino-DuCloux began his four-year term on July 1.

“We are grateful to Lisa Hay for her outstanding service and are confident Fidel Cassino-DuCloux’s extensive experience, commitment to indigent defense, and ability to inspire, teach, and mentor others will ensure that the Oregon federal defender office continues to provide exceptional representation to its clients,” said Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw, who chairs the Ninth Circuit’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders.

Cassino-DuCloux said, “I am energized by this opportunity. The Oregon defender’s staff are smart, dogged, empathetic, and creative in their representation of the most marginalized in our society. They work tirelessly to make sure that not only are our clients’ constitutional rights protected, but also that our clients are heard and respected. I am excited to continue our mission of providing holistic and zealous client-centered advocacy, while supporting our incredible staff as they tackle the challenges to come.”

Cassino-DuCloux joined the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Oregon as an assistant federal public defender in 2007 and became a supervisor in 2020, as the office was adapting to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, he has led and helped support a team of eight attorneys to ensure that clients receive the best possible representation.

Within the local community, Cassino-DuCloux has served on the board of Cascadia Behavioral Health and the Federal Bar Association and co-organized the Haggerty Scholars Program and the Behind the Robe Project, both of which provide underrepresented high school students opportunities to engage with the legal and civic communities. He also is an active participant in literacy programs around Portland.

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Cassino-DuCloux graduated cum laude in 1995 from Tuskegee University, where he was a Woodrow Wilson International Affairs Fellow. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law in 1998 and began his legal practice as a staff attorney for the Louisiana Crisis Assistance Center. In 2000, he received a two-year Ford Foundation Grant to represent residents of the New Orleans St. Thomas Community Housing Project in criminal, civil, housing and family matters. He went on to work as an assistant public defender for the Orleans Indigent Defender Program's juvenile and felony divisions. Displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, he evacuated to Savannah, Georgia, where he worked as a public defender until he relocated to Portland, Oregon, in 2007.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Oregon is headquartered in Portland and maintains branch offices in Eugene and Medford. The office has approximately 83 employees, which include attorneys, paralegals, investigators and administrative personnel. The office opened 1,471 cases and closed 1,825 cases in fiscal year 2022 ending September 30.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender was created by Congress to fulfill the constitutional requirement that financially eligible individuals charged with crimes in the federal justice system be provided with professional legal representation at no cost. By statute, judges of the courts of appeals select and appoint the federal public defender for a renewable four-year term. In the Ninth Circuit, applicants are evaluated by both a local screening committee and the court's Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders, applying Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines. Reappointment to additional terms is based on a comprehensive evaluation of the federal public defender's performance, including an invitation for public comment.

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