

Justine Esack Bio:

Justine Esack assumed the role of Chief Deputy Public Defender in April 2020. In this role, she is responsible for maintaining the operations of the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office, which includes 32 office locations, and nearly 1,200 employees.

Ms. Esack began her Public Defender career in the training rotation as a Deputy Public Defender I at the Office's Central location. Subsequently, she was assigned to the Huntington Park area courthouse, where she earned a reputation as a hard-charging misdemeanor lawyer who obtained acquittal after acquittal for her clients. She worked in Glendale, Eastlake and Sylmar Juvenile before starting a felony trial assignment. Throughout her career as a Los Angeles County Public Defender, she has had experience working in seven different branch and area courts.

Ms. Esack served as Deputy in Charge of the Newhall area office for two years, supervising the misdemeanor staff serving the Santa Clarita Valley. She also worked in felony trials in San Fernando for 15 years representing clients with serious felony charges and charges that are death penalty eligible. There, she earned a reputation as a fierce litigator, a tireless advocate for her clients and a mentor to her colleagues. While in San Fernando, she developed a monthly training program for the attorneys at the San Fernando branch.

Most recently, Ms. Esack served as the Head Deputy Public Defender for the Collaborative Courts and Restorative Justice, supervising attorneys in multiple units, as well as the Supervising Paralegals. She was a Department leader in expanding the Client Engagement Navigation Specialist (CENS) court co-location program collaboration with the Department of Public Health-SAPC. She frequently worked with Department of Mental Health and Office of Diversion and Re-Entry and regularly trained community-based organizations and health care team members on the role of the Public Defender in the justice system. During her tenure as Head Deputy over the Homeless Mobile Unit, the team was expanded to 13 staff members who travel countywide, clearing criminal records for people experiencing homelessness. Their efforts earned them a Special Merit Plaque from the Quality & Productivity Commission.

Ms. Esack earned a Juris Doctorate Degree from Loyola Law School and obtained a Bachelor of Arts as the 1993 Salutatorian of Mount St. Mary's College.

She is extremely proud to call herself a lifelong Los Angeles County Public Defender.