OPD Presents 2026 Annual Public Defender Awards to County Offices

November 19, 2026

Columbus, Ohio — The Office of the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) has presented the 2026 Clara Shortridge Foltz Award, recognizing three different public defender offices for their exceptional work in providing indigent defense services.

During the 18th Annual County Public Defender Summit hosted in Columbus from Nov. 5 to 6, OPD commended three recipients of the 2026 Clara Shortridge Foltz Award, which honors its namesake who was a pioneer in public defense field.

- **The Coshocton County Public Defender Office**
- **The Hancock County Public Defender Office**
- **Christopher Carroll** – Erie County Public Defender Office (posthumously given)

State Public Defender Elizabeth Miller explained the meaning behind the award.

“The Clara Shortridge Foltz Award serves to recognize individuals and offices for their significant impact and superior contribution to indigent defense,” Miller said.

“The Coshocton County Public Defender Office and the Hancock County Public Defender Office are to be commended for their dedication and leadership in the indigent defense field, and their work to defend and advocate on behalf of individuals in their community. OPD also posthumously recognized the contributions of Christopher Carroll to the Erie County Public Defender Office.”



Coshocton County Public Defender Office | Photo credit: Cortlynn Swith

Coshocton County Public Defender Jeffrey Mullen shared his team’s appreciation for the recognition.

“We have a solid team of dedicated professionals who care about our clients,” Mullen said. “Our office is humbled and appreciative of this recognition in memory of Clara Shortridge Foltz, and the ideals that she expressed about public defense so that all may have the full protection of the Sixth Amendment right to counsel, regardless of wealth or position.”