

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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Capital Habeas Chief

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Los Angeles Trial Chief

KELLEY MUNOZ

Santa Ana Branch Chief

YOUNG KIM

Riverside Branch Chief

MARGARET A. FARRAND

Appeals Chief

JONATHAN AMINOFF

Non-Capital Habeas Chief

NEHA CHRISTERNA

Collaborative Courts Chief

Vacancy Announcement

Position: Attorney

Location: Los Angeles, Riverside or Santa Ana, CA

Deadline: March 22, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for full-time attorney positions in its Appeal Unit, Capital Habeas Unit (CHU), Non-Capital Habeas Unit (NCHU), and Trial Unit. These positions are stationed in Los Angeles, Riverside, or Santa Ana, California. The Federal Public Defender's Office is committed to the pursuit of justice by advocating for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of individuals who cannot afford their own lawyer. Through diverse experience, collaborative and thorough case development, focused litigation strategies, and skilled courtroom advocacy, the Office provides the highest quality representation in federal and post-conviction proceedings.

Job Duties: The Office is recruiting for multiple attorney positions, including trial attorney, appellate attorney, capital habeas attorney, immigration specialist attorney, and First Step Act specialist attorney. For detailed descriptions of each role, please visit our careers page at <https://fpdcdca.org/careers/current-openings/>.

Requirements: All applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and be members in good standing of the California Bar or must be willing to sit for the next California Bar exam. Preference will be given to applicants with at least three years of experience in state or federal criminal law or in appeals, and federal judicial clerkship experience. Experience or a commitment to working with culturally diverse populations and marginalized communities is also desired.

Varying hours including nights, weekends, and holidays may be required. A background investigation is required as a condition of employment. In line with current federal appropriations law, applicants must be United States citizens or permanent residents seeking citizenship as described here: <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/search-judiciary-jobs/citizenship-requirements-employment-judiciary>.

Selection Criteria: Candidates must have a demonstrated commitment to indigent criminal defense and/or public interest law; must have superior oral and written communication skills; possess excellent research skills; have the ability to manage a high-volume caseload; and work well in teams. Please review individual attorney vacancy announcements on our careers page for the selection criteria for each role.

Salary/Benefits: This is a full-time, at-will position. Select positions are approved for one year and a day, with a possible extension based on need, budget, or the discretion of the Federal Public Defender. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience and is subject to direct deposit. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and a Thrift Savings Plan. After successful completion of a probationary period, eligible employees may elect to telework up to two days per week, subject to certain conditions. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

How to Apply: Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, two representative writing samples, and three references through our website at <https://fpdcdca.org/careers/current-openings/>. We will accept applications until March 22, 2026, or until filled. Interviews will occur on a rolling basis and the open position may be filled before that date. Priority will be given to early applicants. The Federal Public Defender's Office may fill current and future positions from this vacancy announcement. Please, no phone calls.

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is committed to equal opportunity in the workplace. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.