

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
321 EAST 2nd STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-4202
213-894-2854
213-894-0081 FAX

CUAUHTEMOC ORTEGA

Federal Public Defender

AMY M. KARLIN

Chief Deputy

C. PAMELA GÓMEZ

Capital Habeas Chief

LISA LABARRE

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: Legal Assistant

Location: Los Angeles or Santa Ana, CA

Deadline: March 22, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for a full-time legal assistant position in our Trial Unit and Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) for our Los Angeles and Santa Ana office. 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 legal assistant positions, including trial legal assistant and capital habeas legal assistant. 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 school with a bachelor's degree or at least one-year of specialized experience performing progressively responsible duties as a legal assistant. Extensive relevant experience may substitute a bachelor's degree. Candidates must demonstrate a high level of computer literacy, including expertise with Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat programs. Experience with legal practice-related programs such as evidence review platforms, document management systems, and document indexing tools is also highly preferred. The ideal candidate will also have comprehensive knowledge of legal secretarial principles, practices, methods, and techniques; an understanding of state, district and circuit court rules, protocols, policies, and precedents; and knowledge of legal terminology and Blue Book citation format. The ability to speak, read, and write in Spanish is preferred, but not required. Legal assistants must be available to work during regular business hours, and when necessary, during evenings, weekends, and holidays. This is an in-office position. Telework is not available.

A background investigation is required as a condition of employment. In line with current 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: Successful applicants demonstrate an interest in social justice, civil rights, or indigent defense; must have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills; have strong organizational, analytical, and technical skills; an ability to organize work and set priorities to meet critical deadlines; capable of learning new technological tools, when needed; be able to work independently and take initiative; and work well in teams.

Salary/Benefits: This is a full-time, at-will position. 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. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

How to Apply: Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, 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 an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.