

Position Announcement 21-06
ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER – CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT

Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas (Austin)

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the Western District of Texas is now accepting applications for the position of Assistant Federal Public Defender for the Capital Habeas Unit in Austin, Texas. The Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) is responsible for representing death-sentenced Texas prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings in the United States District Courts in Texas, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court. The CHU represents indigent, death-sentenced prisoners in all four federal districts in Texas.

Requirements. An Assistant Federal Public Defender must be a graduate of an accredited law school, and be a member in good standing of the highest court in the state where licensed, but a Texas bar license is strongly preferred. All applicants must either be (a) admitted to and in good standing with the Texas State Bar, or (b) a member in good standing of another state's bar and be willing to take and able to pass the Texas State Bar examination, if required, within the next two offerings after employment begins and be admitted to the Texas State Bar within two years after employment begins. It is preferred that applicants have capital litigation experience in direct appeal, state post-conviction, or federal habeas corpus proceedings. Other related experience may be considered. Applicants must be team-oriented, exhibit strong writing skills and a commitment to criminal defense for those facing the death penalty. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation, including but not limited to an FBI name and fingerprint check and an IRS tax check.

Duties. CHU attorneys represent death-sentenced prisoners in their federal habeas corpus proceedings. CHU attorneys carry a full caseload, representing clients in all stages of their federal court litigation—from investigation, to briefing at all levels of the court system, through oral advocacy, and in clemency proceedings. Regular responsibilities include: working with clients; digesting large case files and investigative materials; developing litigation strategies; drafting pleadings; conducting evidentiary hearings; presenting oral arguments; working with experts and other witnesses; and supervising teams of investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, and legal assistants. This position may require work on holidays, evenings, and weekends, as the nature of the cases require. Frequent and extended travel may also be required. Federal public defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have an established capacity or clearly demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense practice, a commitment to the representation of indigent accused persons, and a reputation for integrity. Applicants must possess the ability to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, staff, and court and agency personnel as part of their employment. Finally, applicants must also possess skills for collaboration, strategic litigation, compassionate representation, and unique approaches to the issues affecting our clients.

Salary and Benefits. The salary of the successful applicant will be commensurate with the person's qualifications and experience. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. The position does offer federal government employee benefits, including health and life insurance programs, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

How to Apply. Persons may apply by sending a letter of interest (mentioning announcement number 21-06), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample to: Maureen Scott Franco, Federal Public Defender, Western District of Texas, 504 Lavaca St., Suite 960, Austin, Texas 78701-2860, or you may submit your letter of interest and resume in a single PDF document by email to TXW_Employment@fd.org. The document should be named as follows: "Announcement number, position title, last name, first name" (e.g. 21-06 CHU AFD, Smith, John). Electronic submissions sent directly to the Defender will not be considered. For applicants with disabilities, this organization provides reasonable accommodations, which are decided on a case-by-case basis. To request a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact Personnel Administrator Victoria B. Longoria, at (210) 981-2081. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced December 2, 2020 subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender is an Equal Opportunity Employer.