

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT 25-08
SUPERVISORY 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 accepting applications for the position of Supervisory Assistant Federal Public Defender for the Capital Habeas Unit in Austin, Texas. The Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) represents indigent, death-sentenced Texas prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings in the four United States District Courts in Texas, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court.

Requirements. The Supervisory Assistant Federal Public Defender for the CHU will be responsible for managing the CHU. The successful applicant must: (1) undertake the hiring, training, and supervising of staff charged with the representation of petitioners in federal capital habeas proceedings; (2) be able to identify, communicate, and positively resolve internal problems that may impact the CHU's operation; (3) be a talented legal writer and a proven advocate and litigator in capital habeas cases with substantial experience handling capital post-conviction or capital appellate cases; (4) be team oriented, committed to indigent criminal defense, and able to foster the office's role as a resource to the Criminal Justice Act panel members in capital habeas cases; and (5) be a graduate of an accredited law school and 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 be admitted to and in good standing with the Texas State Bar, or a member in good standing of another state's bar and admitted to practice before the Texas State Bar within one year after employment begins. Ten years' attorney experience is required. Management experience and ten years of exclusive or primary capital defense and/or state or federal post-conviction litigation experience are highly preferred. A background in mental health or social work is also helpful. This is a full-time, permanent position. 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. In addition to supervising attorneys and support staff, this position involves acting as liaison to the courts; communicating with other entities involved in representing capital defendants; and meeting with other CHU supervisors. The CHU Supervisor oversees a large caseload, representing death-sentenced people in their federal habeas corpus proceedings, state clemency proceedings, and in proceedings related to execution dates. The CHU Supervisor case responsibilities include (1) close and regular contact with clients, experts, witnesses, family members, and other parties to gather evidence to formulate case strategies; (2) advanced legal research and writing, including pleadings, motions, and appellate briefing; (3) conducting evidentiary hearings and oral arguments; (4) review and analysis of records and other collaborative work with attorneys, mitigation specialists, investigators, and experts; (5) supervising teams of investigators, mitigation specialists, and paralegals. This position requires working holidays, evening and weekend hours, and frequent travel within the United States. Federal public defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have an established capacity and 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 have strong writing and advocacy skills, the ability to work in a team environment, and effective organization skills, including the ability to set and achieve priorities. Applicants must also 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 be team-oriented and be prepared to collaborate, brainstorm, and provide compassionate representation. Fluency in Spanish is highly desirable but not required.

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. Qualified persons may apply by sending a letter of interest addressed to Federal Public Defender Maureen Scott Franco (mentioning announcement 25-08), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample. Capital litigation experience should be described in detail. **Send completed application, in a single PDF document named with applicant's "last name, first name-Announcement 25-08 CHU Supervisory AFD" by email to TXW_Employment@fd.org.** Electronic submissions sent directly to the Defender will not be considered. For applicants with disabilities, this organization provides reasonable accommodation, which is decided on a case-by-case basis. To request reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact personnel administrator Victoria B. Longoria at (210) 981-2081. Position announced August 22, 2025, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

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