

Position Announcement 25-09
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) 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. An Assistant Federal Public Defender must be (1) a graduate of an accredited law school; (2) licensed to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas at the time of employment; and (3) admitted to practice before the Texas state bar within one year after employment begins. 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 people in their federal habeas corpus proceedings, state clemency proceedings, and in proceedings related to execution dates. CHU attorneys carry a full caseload. Their responsibilities include (1) close and regular contact with clients; (2) advanced legal research and writing including pleading, 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) field work, including gathering records and conducting investigations; (6) supervising teams of investigators, mitigation specialists, and paralegals. This position involves work on holidays, evenings, and weekends. Frequent and extended travel may be required. Federal public defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have strong writing and oral advocacy skills, an established record or demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense, a commitment to representing indigent people, and a reputation for ingenuity and integrity. Applicants must also possess the ability to communicate effectively with a diverse clientele, clients' family members, colleagues, staff, and court personnel as part of their employment. It is preferred that applicants have capital litigation experience in state or federal post-conviction proceedings. 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 25-09), 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 25-09 CHU 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. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced August 25, 2025, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

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