

**FEDERAL DEFENDER SERVICES  
OF EASTERN TENNESSEE  
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**About Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee**

Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, Inc., [FDSET] works to keep people out of prison and to stop state executions by adhering to our office's mission and core values—compassion, courage, competency, creativity, and collaboration—when representing clients. Our clients are indigent defendants charged with federal crimes ranging from drug offenses to white-collar conspiracies and clients who have been sentenced to death. We practice client-centered holistic defense lawyering to protect our clients' rights and champion their humanity at every stage of the criminal case and beyond. FDSET seeks to attract and retain a high performing and diverse workforce to serve our clients. We foster an inclusive work environment that promotes commitment, flexibility, and fairness.

FDSET is independent from the federal judiciary and is funded by a sustaining grant awarded by Congress under the Criminal Justice Act, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(g)(2)(B). Compliance with applicable Judiciary policies is a condition of the grant. The Office operates under the supervision of the Board of Directors of the Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee.

FDSET is comprised of two units. The traditional trial unit provides representation to indigent defendants in criminal proceedings in the Eastern District of Tennessee, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court. The traditional unit has offices in Knoxville, Chattanooga and Greeneville. The Capital Habeas Unit, located in Knoxville, provides representation for persons convicted of capital offenses in state and federal court who challenge their convictions and sentences in federal habeas corpus proceedings, and, as appropriate, in state clemency proceedings. The Capital Habeas Unit is also appointed to represent habeas clients in other federal districts and circuits throughout the country.

FDSET employs twenty-four attorneys and twenty-seven staff members. FDSET's distinguished trial, appellate, and Capital Habeas units are assisted by highly trained paralegals, investigators, mitigation experts, and outside subject matter experts.

**Executive Director Position**

The current FDSET Executive Director (also known as the Federal Community Defender of the Eastern District of Tennessee) has held this position for over 23 years. The next Executive Director should be a highly skilled criminal defense attorney with extensive federal trial and appellate experience who is passionate about representing those persons who are unable to retain counsel. The Executive Director must be a zealous advocate for the interests of the indigent criminal defense community, including FDSET and the CJA Panel, on both a local and national level. The Executive Director must be able to work with various government agencies, other defender organizations, and the Courts. The Executive Director should have a proven track record of effective leadership, collaborating with and leading senior managers, and a proven

ability to motivate, support, and develop a diverse staff. As a proven administrator, the Executive Director must ensure the sound fiscal and operational management of an organization with a \$10 million budget and a staff of 51 individuals. The Executive Director should work in partnership with the Board of Directors, stewarding the work of the organization into the future.

This is a full-time position, accordingly, the applicant must reside in or re-locate to the Eastern District of Tennessee if selected as the Executive Director. The annual salary is a fixed amount equal to the salary of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

Among the many duties of the Executive Director, this leader is responsible for:

### ***Inspirational Leadership***

- Serving as a mentor, role model, and elite practitioner of federal criminal defense.
- Collaborating with the Board of Directors to develop a strategic plan for advancing the work and mission of FDSET.
- Maintaining consistent communication with the Board of Directors regarding critical budgetary, strategic, personnel, and program issues.
- Collaborating with senior office managers on matters of policies, procedures, and personnel issues to advance the work of the office.
- Inspiring, supervising, and evaluating attorneys and staff to ensure a high level of staff productivity and quality work product throughout the organization while fostering employee morale and cohesiveness.
- Supervising the Diversity Fellowship Program, the Re-Entry Program, and intern programs operating within FDSET.
- Serving on CJA Panel Selection Committees. These Committees review, evaluate and recommend CJA applicants to the Court for appointment to the CJA Panel. The Executive Director also coordinates and provides high-quality training for the panel attorneys on relevant federal criminal justice issues.
- Promoting and maintaining a commitment to client-centered holistic representation.

### ***External Relations***

- Advocating for the interests of the defense community in the Eastern District of Tennessee.
- Participating nationally with the Federal Defender community and the Defender Services Office of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts on relevant projects, working groups, and advisory committee issues to develop best policies and practices.
- Representing FDSET through public speaking engagements and in teaching young lawyers and law students locally and nationally.
- Developing, maintaining and prioritizing relationships within the Eastern District of Tennessee, including the judiciary, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Clerk's office, the U.S. Marshal's Service, and local jails, and other relevant individuals and organizations.

### ***Administrative Management***

- Handling personnel issues including conflict resolution, remediation, discipline and termination, as appropriate.
- Developing and managing budgets and financial plans.
- Working closely with the Board to ensure FDSET's compliance with fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities.
- Implementing policies and practices that foster a diverse and inclusive staff.
- Discerning resource needs to support FDSET's mission.

### **Qualifications**

- Demonstrated proficiency in federal criminal defense and knowledge of federal habeas corpus practice.
- Ten (10) years of criminal practice experience absent extraordinary circumstances.
- Member in good standing in each state bar and Federal court where admitted to practice.
- Outstanding communication and relationship-building skills.
- Supervisory or management experience including budgeting.
- Advocacy, teaching, training, and media relations skills.
- A commitment to lead by example, passion for federal defense work, and dedication to the mission FDSET.

### **How to Apply**

Applications should include: (1) a cover letter addressing the position's qualifications; (2) a comprehensive curriculum vitae; (3) a 10-15 page writing sample; (4) the names and contact information (addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses) of three professional references; and (5) responses to the attached questionnaire. Please send that information to Professor Dwight Aarons at [daarons@utk.edu](mailto:daarons@utk.edu) with the subject line: "Executive Director application for FDSET."

Submitted materials will be kept confidential and will be examined only by the Board of Directors of the Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee or its designees. Review of candidate materials will continue until the position is filled, with priority given to applications received by August 22, 2022.

Employment is contingent on a satisfactory background investigation. Admission to the Tennessee bar (or a commitment to admission within a year of acceptance of the position) and admission to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee upon acceptance of the position, is mandatory. The successful applicant must be prepared to begin about January 30, 2023.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Other than a motor vehicle violation, have you ever been arrested, pleaded guilty, or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor? If so, please explain.
2. Have you regularly filed income tax returns as required by federal, state and local law? Are you delinquent on any taxes?
3. Have you served in the armed forces? If so, were you honorably discharged? If not, please explain.
4. Have you ever been fired from a job or terminated under pressure? If so, please explain.
5. Have you ever been a party to a lawsuit? If so, please provide the general subject matter, the names of the parties and the court in which it was filed, and the current status of the lawsuit.
6. Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? If so, please explain.
7. Have you ever been held in contempt or disciplined by any Court, committee or state bar? If so, please explain.
8. Have any sanctions been imposed against you by a court or other tribunal? If so, provide the name of the case in which sanctions were imposed, the court or forum in which the case was pending and the nature of the sanction.
9. How many criminal jury trials have you handled as attorney of record? How many criminal appeals have you handled as attorney of record?
10. Are you aware of any reason that your selection as Executive Director of the Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee, Inc., might cause embarrassment to the organization? If so, please explain.

*Use additional pages as needed.*