

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

ANGELA C.C. VIRAMONTES

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Appeals Chief

JONATHAN AMINOFF

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NEHA CHRISTERNA

Collaborative Courts Chief

Vacancy Announcement

Position: Trial Attorney

Location: Santa Ana, CA

Deadline: July 11, 2025

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for a full-time attorney position in its trial unit in Santa Ana, California. The Santa Ana Office represents individuals charged with federal crimes occurring in Orange County. The trial unit is committed to the pursuit of justice by zealously advocating in federal court for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of individuals who are accused or convicted of crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer.

Job Duties: Trial attorneys are responsible for aggressively litigating criminal cases in federal court from the client's initial bail proceedings through jury trial and sentencing. Core job duties include researching and drafting creative, innovative motions; collaborating with a team of investigators, paralegals, and support staff to prepare the client's case for trial; appearing at all court hearings, including as lead or second-chair in jury trials; visiting the client, including at detention facilities, to review discovery and prepare a defense strategy; and, developing persuasive mitigation for negotiations and sentencing. On occasion, trial attorneys are also assigned appeals and post-conviction matters. Trial attorneys must be available to work during regular business hours, and when necessary, during evenings and weekends.

Requirements: All applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and be members in good standing of the California Bar or must be willing to sit for the next California Bar exam. Preference will be given to applicants with at least three years of experience in state and/or federal criminal law or applicants with federal judicial clerkship experience, but neither is required. Applicants with limited or no prior criminal experience should explain their interest in federal criminal practice in their cover letter. Experience or a commitment to working with culturally diverse populations and marginalized communities is also desired.

Selection Criteria: Candidates must have a demonstrated commitment to indigent criminal defense and/or public interest law; must have superior oral and written communication skills; possess excellent research skills; and work well in teams.

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>.

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. After completion of a successful probationary period, eligible employees may elect to telework up to 2 days per week, subject to certain conditions. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

How to Apply: Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, two representative writing samples (limited to 15 pages each), and three references through our website at <https://fpdcdca.org/careers/current-openings/>. All application materials must be received by **Friday, July 11, 2025**; however, interviews will occur on a rolling basis and the open position may be filled before that date. The Federal Public Defender's Office may fill future positions from this vacancy announcement. Please, no phone calls.

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is committed to equal opportunity in the workplace. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.