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Visiting Federal Defender Program United States Sentencing Commission

The United States Sentencing Commission has a Visiting Federal Defender program in Washington, D.C. Starting each year in July, an assistant is detailed to the Commission for one year, which encompasses a full amendment cycle. The detailee is assigned to the Commission's Office of General Counsel, which provides legal advice and counsel to the Chair, Commissioners, and staff of the Sentencing Commission. The detailee performs a variety of tasks and responsibilities dealing with federal sentencing practice and the federal sentencing guidelines. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) in-depth legal research related to sentencing and other issues involving analysis of statutes, proposed legislation, case law, and governmental and other reports; (2) preparation of legal memoranda and analytical reports; (3) preparation of oral and written responses to inquiries from Commissioners, Commission staff, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, judges, and the public generally; (4) preparation of training materials for practitioners and judges in sentencing and guidelines practice; (5) preparation of memoranda and draft language of proposed amendments to the federal sentencing guidelines; and (6) participating in staff working groups that focus on new legislation, guideline amendments, and other sentencing issues.

The Visiting Federal Defender program is designed to benefit FDOs by providing an in-depth view of the Commission's amendment process and exposure to the interplay between the various institutional players in the development of sentencing priorities and policy, as well as an opportunity to hone a specialized set of research and analytical skills. In addition, the program enhances communication and expands the working relationship between the Commission and the federal defender community by providing direct input from line AFPDs from across the country.

Experienced assistant federal defenders are encouraged to apply. Applicants must possess excellent oral and written communication skills. An ability to express, orally and in writing, complex legal issues in clear and succinct language so that the concepts are understood by both lawyers and non-lawyers is essential. Applicants also must demonstrate the capacity to work effectively with others.

Prior to applying to the program, applicants must obtain the approval of their federal defender. Upon the request of a federal defender, additional funding may be provided to that federal defender organization (FDO) to support the hiring of a temporary replacement for up to one year if the applicant also participates in the Office of Defender Services Visiting Defender Program, also in Washington D.C.

The person selected for this temporary duty assignment will continue to be an employee of their respective FDOs, which will continue to pay all salary and benefits. In addition to the regular salary, however, the detailee will receive a stipend from the Commission for both housing in Washington and per diem while on the temporary assignment. A certain number of round-trips home will also be provided for by the Commission.

For information regarding the application process or for any other questions concerning this position, please contact: Denise Barrett, Sentencing Resource Counsel, (410) 474-9861, denisecbarrett@gmail.com.

Applications should be sent to Marjorie Meyers, Chair of the Federal Defender Sentencing Guideline Committee, c/o Dora.Madrigal@fd.org

**contact information updated*