



HONOR • DEFEND • LEAD

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT RESEARCH and WRITING SPECIALIST

The Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Pennsylvania is seeking a Research and Writing Specialist for the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU). This is a full-time attorney position in the Harrisburg office. The Capital Habeas Unit represents death-sentenced prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings. To achieve our mission, we value an office culture that attracts, recruits, supports, inspires, and sustains a diverse workforce to provide the highest quality of legal service in all that we do.

RESPONSIBILITIES: A Research and Writing Specialist provides advanced legal research, drafting, analysis and litigation assistance to Assistant Federal Public Defenders in the CHU. A Specialist stays apprised of the latest developments in habeas corpus and criminal law and procedure in federal and state courts, especially Pennsylvania. Specialists analyze and research client and case-related records, develop relationships with clients through meetings and correspondence, draft federal petitions and appellate briefs, and assist with record collection and fact investigations. All CHU clients are represented by collaborative teams of paralegals, investigators, and attorneys, which requires all members to possess strong oral, written and interpersonal skills, independent and cooperative skills, and ability to prioritize and meet critical deadlines. Research and writing specialists may appear in court only in exceptional circumstances.

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS: A proven commitment to representing indigent defendants or other public interest experience is preferred. A Specialist must be a graduate of a law school, a member in good standing of a state bar, and eligible for admission to the bar of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Familiarity with federal habeas corpus or other post-conviction litigation, prior criminal/capital/appellate work, experience with individuals with mental health concerns, and fluency in Spanish are highly desirable. A valid driver's license is required. Specialists may be required to work evenings, weekends, and holidays as necessary. Ability to travel extensively, at times, throughout the Commonwealth and out of state is required.

SALARY AND BENEFITS: This is a full-time position with federal salary and benefits based on qualifications and years of experience (JS grades 9-15), consistent with federal guidelines and regulations. This position is subject to mandatory Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit) participation for payment of net pay. Employees of the Federal Defender are members of the judicial branch of government; they are considered "at will" and are not covered by the Civil Service Reform Act. Selected candidate will be subject to a background check as a condition of employment.

Our CHU is in Harrisburg, the #1 city to live in Pennsylvania according to 2023-2024 U.S. News and World Report ranking. Telework is offered at the discretion of the Federal Public Defender and is currently available two days per week (Mondays and Fridays). While Research and Writing Specialists are required to be in the office regularly and preference will be given to candidates who live or can relocate within commuting distance of Harrisburg, remote work with routinely scheduled travel to the office may be considered for an ideal candidate.

HOW TO APPLY: Interested candidates should apply by forwarding: 1) a letter of interest, 2) a detailed resume, and 3) one writing sample (no more than 20 pages) *all together in ONE pdf* to:

Diana_Vazquez@fd.org

Multiple vacancies may be filled through this announcement. Positions are open until filled.
Applications received by **May 17, 2024**, will receive priority consideration.

The Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Pennsylvania is an Equal Opportunity Employer.