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# Federal Public Defender

## WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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### LEGAL ASSISTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

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**Position:** Legal Assistant

**Location:** Pittsburgh, PA

**Application Deadline:** February 13, 2026 (or until filled)

**Posted:** January 30, 2026

**Office Website:** <https://paw.fd.org/>

**Salary Range:** \$42,117 - \$75,108

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The Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania is accepting applications for the position of **Legal Assistant**.

The **Legal Assistant** will provide administrative support to attorneys, including mail processing, client communications, and calendar management. In addition, the position will support the office's records management needs through the scanning, organizing, and purging of closed case files.

This position requires strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to handle confidential information with discretion. The **Legal Assistant** must be able to manage competing priorities, work independently, and communicate professionally with attorneys, staff, and external contacts.

#### **About Us:**

The Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania provides legal representation to persons financially unable to retain counsel in federal criminal and related proceedings. We handle federal trials, direct appeals to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, petitions for writ of certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court, habeas corpus petitions, and related proceedings on behalf of our clients. Representation includes counsel and investigative, expert and other services, as necessary to meet the demands of the case and the needs of the client.

Our office includes the Federal Public Defender and attorneys known as Assistant Federal Public Defenders. In addition to our attorneys, we have a group of talented administrative staff, paralegals, investigators, social workers, and information technology experts. The Federal Public Defender main office is in Pittsburgh, with branch offices in Erie and Johnstown.

## **About Pittsburgh:**

Pittsburgh is a vibrant, livable city known for its rich history, thriving arts and cultural scene, and strong sense of community. Once an industrial powerhouse, the city has successfully transformed into a national hub for healthcare, education, technology, and innovation, anchored by world-class institutions and a growing startup ecosystem. Pittsburgh is home to top-ranked universities, nationally recognized hospitals, and a diverse workforce that values collaboration and creativity.

Beyond the city, Western Pennsylvania features a wide range of communities—from walkable urban neighborhoods to small towns and suburban areas—providing flexible living options for professionals and families alike. The region is known for its affordable housing, short commutes, and lower cost of living compared to many major metropolitan areas. With access to rivers, state parks, trails, and outdoor recreation, residents can enjoy four distinct seasons and an active lifestyle. Combined with a welcoming culture, strong local pride, and close proximity to other major East Coast and Midwest cities, Western Pennsylvania is an ideal place to build a rewarding career and a fulfilling life.

## **Duties and Responsibilities of the Legal Assistant:**

- **Records Management:**
  - Scan and digitize closed case files in accordance with office records retention policies and procedures.
  - Organize and label electronic files to ensure accurate retrieval and compliance.
  - Review closed files for purging eligibility and prepare materials for secure destruction.
  - Ensure sensitive and confidential materials are handled appropriately at all times.
- **Administrative Support:**
  - Maintain attorneys' calendars, setting appointments as needed.
  - Receive, screen, and refer telephone calls.
  - Scan and route incoming mail to appropriate destinations.
  - Prepare outgoing client correspondence.
  - Organize and maintain electronic client files and case histories.
  - Deliver and retrieve documents from court as needed.
  - Perform photocopying, scanning, shredding, and other case-related duties as assigned.
  - Serves as receptionist as assigned.

## **Attributes of the Ideal Candidate:**

We are seeking a self-directed, mission-driven professional who is:

- Is comfortable working both independently and collaboratively in a law office environment.
- Thinks strategically and proactively, especially when resources are limited.
- Brings cultural humility, strong interpersonal skills, and sound professional judgment.
- Believes deeply in the work of public defense.

## **Qualifications:**

Applicants must be high school graduates or equivalent; with at least two years of general work experience. Education above the high school level may be substituted for experience requirements. Previous experience in a legal office or environment is preferred but not required.

Qualified candidates should possess:

- Excellent organization, communication, and administrative skills
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite, file scanning software and hardware, and the ability to scan, digitize, and organize case files, with a willingness to learn as needed.

This position requires considerable initiative, resourcefulness, creativity and drive; excellent writing skills, computer proficiency, the ability to communicate and work well with others; and a commitment to obtaining justice for indigent persons.

## **Benefits:**

This position is full-time with a comprehensive benefits package that includes:

- Generous Health/Vision/Dental/Life Insurance Coverage
- Dependent and Long-term Care Insurance Programs
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Commuter Benefit Program, including Mass Transit and Parking Reimbursement Accounts
- Earned paid time off, including paid sick leave
- 11 Paid Federal Holidays
- Up to 12 weeks of Paid Parental Leave
- Mandatory participation in the Federal Employees Retirement System
- Optional participation in the Thrift Savings Plan retirement account with up to 5% agency matching contributions

- Eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
- Employee Assistance Program (confidential counseling and assistance)
- Credit for prior federal service

**Accessibility:**

We are committed to an inclusive and accessible application process. If you need an accommodation due to a disability during any stage of the application or interview process, please contact Joe Pisciotta at [Joseph\\_Pisciotta@FD.org](mailto:Joseph_Pisciotta@FD.org). If hired, we are dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to support your success and ensure equal access to opportunities in the workplace.

**Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:**

Our office values diversity, is committed to equity and inclusion, and aspires to create a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, openness, and humility that honors the people we represent. We believe representation is better when members of the defense team have diverse backgrounds and experiences. We seek an individual who shares this belief and commitment. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to the Federal Public Defender because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences. We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, persistence, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully. The Federal Public Defender seeks applications from a diverse group of qualified individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, nation of origin, culture, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, education, opinions, age, languages spoken, veteran status, disability, religion, and socioeconomic circumstance. We especially encourage applications from members of the BIPOC community, people affected by the criminal legal system, and people from other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

**Application Process:**

Interested applicants are invited to apply by submitting a single pdf document that includes a resume and cover letter via email to the attention of: Elisa A. Long, Federal Public Defender, [paw\\_employment@fd.org](mailto:paw_employment@fd.org), Subject: 2026-02

One or more positions may be filled from this posting. Hiring for this position is dependent on the availability of funds. This office is an equal opportunity employer.