Office of the Federal Public Defender
Middle District of Florida
Charles L. Pritchard, Jr.
Federal Public Defender

Vacancy Announcement #2026-024 **Posting: September 4, 2026**
Position Title: Research & Writing Attorney (CHU) (multiple) **Closing Date: October 2, 2026**
Duty Station: Tampa, Florida **Permanent Full-Time**

The Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Florida (MDFL) is accepting applications for multiple positions for a Research and Writing Attorney (R&W) in the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU), located in Tampa, Florida. Currently, the majority of our staff live in the Tampa Bay Area, and many work from home up to 3 days a week. We also have attorneys who live throughout the country and work remotely.

THE MDFL, CHU: The CHU's dedicated team of attorneys, investigators, paralegals, and legal assistants represent indigent, death-sentenced Floridians pursuing federal habeas corpus relief. CHU attorneys regularly litigate in federal district courts, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court, including for clients under active death warrants. The CHU litigates a variety of issues on behalf of our clients, including prosecutorial and police misconduct, *Brady* and *Giglio* claims, juror misconduct, forensic and junk science challenges, lethal injection challenges, ineffective assistance of counsel issues, and innocence claims. Our attorneys are zealous advocates of the highest caliber, devoted to ensuring our clients receive the best possible representation. The inherent humanity of our clients is at the forefront of all we do.

Duties: The scope of our work includes all stages of federal habeas corpus proceedings, as well as stay litigation during active death warrants, method of execution challenges, and executive clemency. The CHU is client-centered with an interdisciplinary team approach. Each client is assigned a team of at least two attorneys, an investigator, a mitigation specialist, and a paralegal. Regular responsibilities include meeting and working with clients on Florida's death row near Starke, Florida; analyzing large case files and investigative materials; developing litigation strategies; drafting fact- and law-intensive pleadings, including federal habeas petitions, motions, and appellate briefs; crafting effective narratives; working with experts and other witnesses; and most importantly, fighting for our clients with zeal and compassion. The CHU prides itself on creative litigation and advocacy, including brainstorming novel strategies and the use of film to enhance advocacy for our clients. R&Ws, like all members of the CHU, are encouraged and expected to attend annual trainings and conferences across the country with the office, including on topics such as forensic science, race, mental health, intellectual disability, persuasive storytelling, and courtroom advocacy.

Qualifications:

- Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited law school and admitted to practice in good standing before the highest court in any state by the time they commence work. Bar membership in Florida, or familiarity with Florida capital litigation, is valued, but not required.

- Three or more years of experience in criminal defense, post-conviction (state or federal), and/or capital litigation is preferred. However, consideration may be given to exemplary applicants with less experience who exhibit the ideals of our office.

- The ability to communicate effectively and build relationships with clients, witnesses, colleagues, courts, and agency personnel is essential.

- As much of the CHU's work involves written advocacy, exceptional writing skills are required.

- Experience interacting with individuals with mental illness or intellectual disabilities is very beneficial.

Selection Criteria: The successful applicant(s) will demonstrate a commitment to indigent criminal defense, passion for client-centered representation, excellent research and writing skills, and the ability to work as part of a team.

Salary and Benefits: The starting salary for a R&WS (CHU) falls within a range of **$61,722 (Grade 9, Step 1) to $192,331 (Grade 15, Step 10) per annum for Fiscal Year 2026**. The salary of the successful applicant will be commensurate with the person's qualifications and experience. This is a full-time position with federal government employment benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, and Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

Conditions of Employment: Applicants must be U.S. citizens or eligible to work in and for the United States. Appointment to this position is contingent upon successful completion of an FBI name and fingerprint check. Employees of the Federal Public Defender are members of the judicial branch of government. They are considered "at-will" and can be terminated with or without cause. Employees are not covered by the Civil Service Reform Act.

How to Apply: Qualified persons may apply by submitting **a letter of interest, resume, three professional references, and representative legal writing sample in a single Adobe PDF format**. **Preference will be given to applications received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 2, 2026.** An email confirming receipt of the required PDF will be sent to all applicants. Submissions that are incomplete or fail to follow the instructions above will not be considered.

Please send your submission to attention:
Office of the Federal Public Defender, Middle District of Florida
Jesus DeJesus, Human Resources Assistant
FLM_HumanResources@fd.org
Only those selected for interview will receive further communication.

The FPDO provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. The decision on granting reasonable accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The FPDO is a branch of the U.S. Courts, an **Equal Opportunity Employer**, and operates under authority of the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A, to provide indigent defense services in federal criminal cases and related matters in the federal courts. We provide equal opportunity for all qualified people who desire to use their skills and abilities in our workplace on behalf of our clients, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or disability.