

Position Announcement 2026-03
Assistant Federal Defender, Capital Habeas Unit
Little Rock, Arkansas

The Federal Public Defender for the Eastern District of Arkansas is accepting applications for an Assistant Federal Public Defender in the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU).

Who we are: The CHU represents death-sentenced prisoners in federal postconviction proceedings. We advocate for the legal rights and inherent dignity of persons sentenced to death. We value collaboration and a client-centered approach in our work.

Who we are looking for: We are looking for someone with a commitment to indigent criminal defense. Ideal candidates will have excellent oral and written communication skills, will work well with a team, and will be able to multitask, to meet concrete deadlines, and to exercise discipline. The ideal candidate will be client-centered, creative, open-minded, a quick learner, honest, hard-working, energetic, and respectful of others. The ideal candidate will possess a strong commitment to social justice.

Job responsibilities: The chosen candidate will be responsible for working on all stages of capital habeas cases. Duties include meeting with and developing relationships with clients; reviewing and summarizing trial transcripts; supervising teams of investigators, paralegals, and other attorneys; directing and reviewing the results of investigations; working with experts; drafting habeas corpus petitions and briefs; conducting evidentiary hearings; presenting oral arguments; pursuing clemency; and seeking stays of execution.

Required qualifications: Applicants must be members in good standing of a State Bar and must be eligible for admission to the Bar of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas, as well as the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. A final offer of employment is subject to a background check and availability of funding.

Preferred qualifications: Membership in the Arkansas Bar or willingness to obtain membership is preferred. Preference will be given to candidates with experience—whether during practice or through a judicial clerkship—in criminal law, complex civil litigation, death-penalty litigation, or habeas corpus litigation.

Salary and benefits: Salary ranges from \$76,748 to \$197,100 commensurate with experience and qualifications. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and the thrift savings plan. The position is excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. We are an equal opportunity employer.

How to apply: To be considered, please send the following in PDF form to Caletta_Jones@fd.org: (1) A letter of interest; (2) a resume, (3) a writing sample; and (4) three references. A final offer of employment is subject to a background check and the availability of funding. More than one vacancy may be filled.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
NO PHONE CALLS OR FOLLOW-UP EMAILS PLEASE