



Federal Public Defender District of Puerto Rico

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Federal Defender

Position Announcement # 2026-07

PARALEGAL

WORK THAT MATTERS. DEFENSE THAT CAN'T BE BOUGHT.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the District of Puerto Rico is accepting applications for the Paralegal position. More than one vacancy may be filled from this announcement.

WHY THIS OFFICE IS DIFFERENT

We're not a bureaucracy pretending to care about indigent defense. We're people who've chosen this work because we believe everyone deserves a fierce advocate, regardless of their bank account. Our 30+ attorneys range from brilliant lawyers fresh from clerkships to seasoned litigators, and they're backed by investigators, mitigation specialists, and administrative staff who are equally as invested in our clients' outcomes. We're serious about growth: mentorship, training, and collaboration aren't perks here, they're how we work. We don't practice in isolation, we brainstorm theories together, workshop suppression hearings as a team, and run mock trials. We test our themes, challenge each other's assumptions, and refine our narratives. We present context alongside facts, humanity alongside allegations, and complete narratives instead of piecemeal arguments.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Paralegal position provides a range of legal support services to staff attorneys. Overall duties may include legal research and writing, case preparation and file management, discovery management and manipulation, drafting pleadings and correspondence, assisting in the interviewing of clients and witnesses, developing and maintaining research banks, assisting with office training, and providing litigation support.

Several Paralegal positions are available within the Office, encompassing the following roles and responsibilities:

Discovery Coordinator: The Discovery Coordinator is responsible for the intake, processing, organization, and management of electronic discovery across all assigned cases. This role serves the entire case team — attorneys, paralegals, investigators, and mitigation specialists — by ensuring that discovery materials are accessible, well-organized, and reviewable using appropriate technology. The Discovery Coordinator also works directly with IT to evaluate, implement, and maintain the office's discovery management tools. This is a demanding, fast-paced position requiring strong technical knowledge, meticulous organizational skills, and the ability to collaborate across all levels of the office.

Litigation Support Paralegal: The Litigation Support Paralegal supports attorneys in active case preparation and litigation. This role requires strong legal and analytical skills, creative thinking, technical proficiency with courtroom presentation tools, and the ability to work at a high pace directly alongside trial teams. The Litigation Support Paralegal collaborates with attorneys, paralegals, investigators, mitigation specialists, the Discovery Coordinator, and IT, and serves as the office's primary resource for the use of litigation technology in court. This position also carries ongoing responsibilities for evaluating new tools and

improving office-wide litigation support practices. It may (and likely will) involve varying work hours, including nights, weekends, and occasional holidays.

Appeals & Post-Conviction Paralegal: The Appeals & Post-Conviction Paralegal provides legal support to staff attorneys handling direct appeals and post-conviction matters in federal court. Duties include reviewing trial court records and transcripts, identifying and researching potential appellate issues, assisting in the drafting of appellate briefs and motions, and communicating with clients. The Paralegal maintains familiarity with the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure and the local rules of the applicable circuit court, ensures timely filing of all court documents, and tracks case deadlines across an active database. The position may also assist with habeas corpus petitions and other post-conviction proceedings. This includes the creation, maintenance, organization, and indexing of case files, case management functions such as calendaring and docket control, aiding in the preparation and submission of pleadings and correspondence, and participating in the development of evidence, including the collecting, organizing, summarizing and analyzing of records and other materials.

REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should have at least five years of paralegal or comparable experience. Experience with maintaining electronic case files, scanning, and document management and conversion software is desirable. Experience with computer-assisted research and litigation support, as well as case management software such as Box, Adobe, Eclipse, and CaseMap (or an equivalent) is favored. Willingness to learn and work with new or updated case and document management software is imperative. The successful applicant will have strong research and organizational skills, the ability to work independently and on a team, and a commitment to the representation of indigent clients.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Appointment to this position is contingent upon the successful completion of an FBI name and fingerprint check. Federal Public Defender employees are members of the judicial branch of the government and are considered "at will." This position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. You must be a U.S. citizen or person authorized to work in the United States.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The starting salary is commensurate with experience, qualifications, and education. Entry Level is Judiciary Schedule Plan (JSP) 11-1 (\$74,678) plus Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and is subject to mandatory Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit) participation for payment. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. This position is full-time with a comprehensive benefits package that includes health and life insurance, vision and dental benefits, flexible spending accounts, paid time off, sick leave, paid leave for all federal holidays, and participation in the Federal Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP with up to 5% government matching contributions).

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

In **one** PDF document, please submit a letter of interest, résumé, and three references to:

Federal Public Defender, District of Puerto Rico, Selection Committee
At: Candy_Carbaugh@fd.org
Email subject line should read: **2026-07 – Paralegal**

Applications to be considered must be received by May 30, 2026. This position will remain open until filled and is subject to the availability of funding.

The Federal Public Defender for the District of Puerto Rico is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We seek to hire individuals who will promote the diversity of the office and federal practice.