

Elisa A. Long
Federal Public Defender

Sarah Levin
Managing Attorney, Trial Unit

Samantha L. Stern
*Managing Attorney,
Appeals/Non-Capital Habeas
Unit*

Kelly Culshaw
*Managing Attorney,
Capital Habeas Unit*

Federal Public Defender

WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

1001 Liberty Avenue, Suite 1500
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
(412) 644-6565 (phone)
(412) 644-4594 (fax)
paw.fd.org



PARALEGAL (FEDERAL CAPITAL CASE)

Position: Full-Time or Part-Time Paralegal

Location: Remote (U.S.)

Application Deadline: Oct. 15, 2026 (or until filled)

Posted: October 2, 2026

Full-Time Salary Range: \$77,211 - \$169,060

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

The Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Pennsylvania is accepting applications for the position of **Paralegal** to join the defense team in a federal capital case. **This position is fully remote, and candidates may reside anywhere in the United States. It is open to full-time or part-time work.** This is a term appointment expected to last for the duration of the case.

The Paralegal is an integral member of the capital defense team and works under the direction of learned counsel to manage the documentary side of a federal death-penalty prosecution. The position organizes and maintains the voluminous discovery, records, and work product generated in a capital case; builds and administers the team's document-review and case-management databases; cite-checks and finalizes pleadings; prepares exhibits and trial materials; and tracks court deadlines and filings. The Paralegal also assists attorneys and investigators with legal research, with the collection and organization of social history and other records, and with client, expert, and witness contact. **A strong preference will be given to candidates with prior federal capital trial experience and experience managing large-volume discovery and e-discovery platforms.**

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.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Paralegal:

- Receives, logs, processes, and organizes discovery productions, including digital evidence, forensic reports, recordings, and law enforcement and agency records; maintains a discovery index and tracks outstanding requests and productions.
- Builds and administers document-review and case-management databases (such as Air Table, Relativity, Everlaw, or similar platforms); codes and tags documents; and creates searchable, well-organized electronic case files accessible to the full team.
- Collects, reviews, and organizes social history and other records obtained by the mitigation team; prepares records chronologies and summaries; and tracks releases, subpoenas, and records requests.
- Conducts legal research; cite-checks, proofreads, and formats motions, briefs, and proposed orders; and prepares tables of contents and authorities.
- Prepares and files documents in CM/ECF, including sealed and ex parte filings; calendars court deadlines, hearings, and internal due dates; and ensures compliance with local rules and court orders.
- Prepares exhibit lists, witness binders, demonstrative exhibits, jury selection materials, and other trial and hearing materials; coordinates logistics for hearings and trial, including trial-site technology and document management.
- Participates in client visits.
- Assists in preparing and organizing materials for the mitigation submission to the Department of Justice Capital Case Section and for expert review.
- Maintains strict confidentiality and secure handling of sensitive client, mental health, and discovery materials, including materials subject to protective orders.
- Maintains regular, reliable communication with the defense team while working remotely, including participation in scheduled team meetings.

Attributes of the Ideal Candidate:

- Has prior experience supporting a federal capital trial team, or substantial experience in complex federal criminal litigation involving large-volume discovery.
- Is highly organized, detail-oriented, and able to manage and prioritize many deadlines at once.
- Is comfortable working both independently in a remote setting and collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary defense team.
- Thinks strategically and proactively, especially when resources and time are limited.

- Brings cultural humility, strong interpersonal skills, and sound professional judgment, including the discretion required to handle highly sensitive information.
- Believes deeply in the work of public defense and in the dignity of every client.

Qualifications:

Applicants must be high school graduates or equivalent, with at least three years of general work experience and three years of specialized experience. Education above the high school level may be substituted for experience requirements. Additional education or certification as a Paralegal is preferred but not required. The ability to read, write, and speak fluently in Spanish or Portuguese is preferred but not required.

Qualified candidates should possess:

- A strong legal, administrative, or paralegal background, preferably in federal criminal defense.
- Experience with e-discovery and litigation-support platforms (such as Air Table, Relativity, Everlaw, or similar), CM/ECF, and large-volume document management.
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Acrobat, and legal research tools such as Westlaw and Lexis, and a willingness to learn other programs, as needed.
- Excellent organization, writing, proofreading, and communication skills.

This position requires considerable initiative, resourcefulness, and creativity; the ability to communicate and work well with others; and a commitment to obtaining justice for indigent persons. Because this is a remote position, applicants must have a suitable, private workspace and reliable high-speed internet access; the office will provide necessary computer equipment and secure access to office systems.

This position requires some travel for client visits, team meetings, hearings, and trial, which may involve extended stays during trial. Travel expenses are reimbursed in accordance with federal judiciary travel regulations.

Benefits:

This position may be filled on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time employees receive a comprehensive benefits package that includes the following; part-time employees working a regular schedule of at least 16 hours per week are generally eligible for the same benefits on a prorated basis:

- Generous Health/Vision/Dental/Life Insurance Coverage
- Dependent and Long-term Care Insurance Programs
- Flexible Spending 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. 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 cover letter, resume, and writing sample via email to the attention of: Elisa A. Long, Federal Public Defender, paw_employment@fd.org, Subject: **2026-14**. Please indicate in your cover letter whether you are seeking full-time or part-time work and describe your prior capital and complex-litigation experience.

One or more positions may be filled from this posting. Hiring for this position is dependent on the availability of funds. The selected candidate will be subject to a background check. This office is an equal opportunity employer.