FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
2026-23

Position: Social Worker – Mitigation Specialist **Location:** Albuquerque, NM
Opening Date: October 30, 2026 **Closing Date:** November 29, 2026
Target Start Date: December 2026 **Office Website:** https://nm.fd.org/
Salary Range: JSP 11 – 14 (Salary and position commensurate with experience)

The Federal Public Defender for the District of New Mexico is seeking a full-time Social Worker – Mitigation Specialist in the Albuquerque office. The Social Worker is an integral member of the interdisciplinary defense team. The mission of our office is to provide high quality, effective, and ethical legal representation to our clients charged with federal crimes. We are an equal opportunity employer. We seek to hire individuals who will promote the diversity of the office and federal practice.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Identify and access resources and services in the community for clients needing mental health and physical health treatment, substance abuse treatment, housing, and employment. This position will assist clients in obtaining documents, transportation, social security benefits, and other needs related to re-entering the community after incarceration, to include conditions of release on bond or as alternatives to incarceration.

The mitigation aspect of the position will involve taking social histories, conducting record analysis, investigation, gathering and summarizing social history records, conducting trauma-informed interviews with clients and individuals with relevant knowledge about the client's childhood development, education, employment, medical, and mental health history, and writing detailed reports. This position will consult with experts, develop and maintain relationships with clients, their family members, local social service providers, pretrial service/probation officers, and other entities to support both the client and the attorney assigned to the case. This position may also require assisting with the development and presentation of evidence in court proceedings, field investigation, and reviewing and analyzing discovery and other case documentation. Other duties as assigned.

Required Qualifications:

- This position requires a significant degree of independent judgment and self-direction. Applicants must have a strong, reliable, self-motivated work ethic, and an ability to work well with minimal supervision.
- Must possess social and emotional intelligence, have effective people and communication skills, and be able to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Must possess excellent oral and written skills and have a strong ability to prioritize and organize your day/week.
- Must have a valid driver's license and ability to travel as needed for investigation, interviews, field offices, training, and any other necessary travel.
- Must be dedicated to the organization's mission and committed to helping indigent, under-served, marginalized and diverse communities.
- Must be sensitive to cultural differences. A large percentage of our clients are of Native American or Latin American descent.
- Applicants must have a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or equivalent and two years' experience as a social worker.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience with criminal defense practice, federal or state public defense, mitigation, forensic social work, or other legal social work.
- Experience with office confidentiality clauses such as attorney/client privilege.
- Master of Social Work (MSW) with four years' experience.
- Previous leadership/training/mentoring experience.
- Ability to analyze and make recommendations for process improvements.
- Spanish language proficiency (speaking, writing, or both) is highly desired.

Salary and Benefits:

This is a full-time, at-will position within the federal judiciary. The salary range is JSP 11/1 at $75,489 to JSP 14/1 at $127,141, based on experience and qualifications. The position includes a comprehensive benefits package, featuring health, dental, vision, and life insurance; 13 to 26 days of earned annual leave depending on years of service; 13 days of earned sick leave per year; and 12 weeks of paid parental leave after one year of service. Employees also receive 11 paid federal holidays, participate in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), and may contribute to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) with up to 5 percent government matching. The position is eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), access to wellness resources and programming, credit for prior federal service, and regular continuing education opportunities. A one day per week teleworking option may be available depending on workload and office needs.

How to Apply:

Interested applicants should submit a single pdf document that includes a cover letter, resume, a writing sample demonstrating analytical, assessment, or professional report-writing skills (redacted work product is acceptable), and three references via email to the attention of:

Michelle Dworak, Administrative Officer
FDNM-HR@fd.org
Subject: 2026-23 Social Worker

Application Deadline: Applications reviewed on a rolling basis with priority given to those who apply by November 29, 2026. The position may close before the deadline or may remain open until filled and is subject to funding availability. Please, no phone inquiries. Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted.

Conditions of Employment:

Employment is subject to a background check, including fingerprinting. This position is part of the excepted service and does not carry Civil Service tenure. U.S. citizenship or authorization to work in the U.S. and receive compensation as a federal employee is required. Salary is paid via direct deposit.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

Our office values diversity and is committed to equity and inclusion. We aspire to embody values of mutual respect, collaboration, openness, and humility that honor the people we represent. Our representation is better when members of the defense team and staff members have diverse backgrounds and experiences. In our hiring, we seek individuals who share these values. We embrace the unique backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences our employees bring to our office. We are interested in applicants' talent, diligence, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully – no matter the allegation or circumstance.