

OFFICE OF THE
FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

Chief Federal Defender
Dumaka Shabazz

164 Rosa L. Parks Blvd. Nashville, TN 37203 615-736-5047

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT No. 2026-02

Position: Assistant Federal Public Defender (Research & Writing Specialist) – Trial Unit –
Nashville, Tennessee

Application Deadline: Open until filled, preference given to those applying by March 3, 2026.

The Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Tennessee is accepting applications for a full-time Assistant Federal Public Defender (Research and Writing Specialist) in the Trial Unit. The Office of the Federal Public Defender operates under authority of the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A, to provide representation in federal criminal matters in the federal courts.

Our attorneys and staff are fearless advocates, devoted to indigent defense, upholding the Constitution, and ensuring that every client’s story is told with dignity and compassion. Within the office, we relate to each other guided by a philosophy of inspiration, connection, and empowerment. We are seeking a licensed attorney to specialize in district court motions practice, circuit court appeals, and resentencing projects.

Job Description and Duties:

This is a writing intensive job. Depending on qualifications, job responsibilities could include drafting appellate briefs, petitions for rehearing, petitions for certiorari, habeas and other post-conviction motions, and substantive motions in the district court. The position requires a superior ability to examine trial records and analyze and research legal issues. The position may include preparing and presenting oral argument to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.

The ideal candidate will be a zealous, client-centered appellate advocate who is willing and able to work on teams, share ideas and resources, and engage in collaborative efforts in matters impacting clients within our district, the Sixth Circuit, and the Supreme Court.

Secondary responsibilities of the position include working with other appellate attorneys in presenting trainings for MDTN staff and CJA panel attorneys and consulting with trial and panel attorneys on individual cases at the trial stage.

Requirements and Qualifications:

The Assistant Federal Public Defender must be: 1) a law school graduate; and 2) admitted to practice in good standing (or be eligible to be admitted) before the United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee. Additionally, all Assistant Federal Public Defenders are

encouraged to become admitted to practice before the Tennessee state courts.

Qualified candidates must have an aptitude for trial litigation and superior communication. The successful applicant will have excellent interpersonal skills, good judgment, the ability to prioritize and to work both independently and cooperatively. Criminal defense legal experience is preferred but not required. Applicants must have strong writing and advocacy skills, an established capacity or demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense, a sterling reputation for personal and professional integrity, a commitment to the representation of indigent people, and an ability to work well in a team environment. Applicants must be a U.S. Citizen or a lawful permanent resident who is eligible to work in the U.S. and is either currently seeking U.S. Citizenship or intends to become a U.S. Citizen when eligible.

Conditions of Employment:

The selected candidate will be subject to a comprehensive background check or investigation, including an F.B.I. name and fingerprint check, and subsequent favorable suitability determination for employment. Employees of the Federal Public Defender's Office are in the excepted service, are considered "at-will" employees, serve at the pleasure of the Defender. In line with current appropriations law, applicants must be citizens of the United States or permanent residents seeking citizenship as described here:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/search-judiciary-jobs/citizenship-requirements-employment-judiciary>. The position is contingent on confirmation of fiscal year 2026 funding.

Salary and Benefits:

The position is full-time with federal benefits and salary commensurate with experience and qualifications and comparable to that of Assistant U.S. Attorneys with similar qualifications and experience. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by direct deposit. For information regarding benefits, see www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits. The position does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. Final offer of employment is subject to an FBI background check.

Application Process:

To apply, combine the following documents in a *single* Adobe PDF and email to TNM_HR@fd.org with the subject line "**AFPD Writing Specialist - 2026-02**":

- a brief cover letter explaining your interest in the position and your qualifications;
- a resume;
- three references including contact information; and
- a representative writing sample.

Applications submitted by fax or mail will not be considered. Preference given to applications received by March 3, 2026. Applications will be reviewed as received. We reserve the right to end the posting early. No phone calls, please. More than one position may be filled from this posting.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Tennessee is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.