

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

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**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT No. 2026-01**

Position: Assistant Federal Public Defender – Trial Unit – Nashville, Tennessee  
Application Deadline: Open until filled, preference given to those applying by March 3, 2026.

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The Federal Public Defender for the Middle District of Tennessee is accepting applications for a full-time Assistant Federal Public Defender 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.

**Job Description and Duties:**

An Assistant Federal Public Defender provides legal representation to clients charged with federal criminal offenses before federal magistrate and district courts in the Middle District of Tennessee, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and Supreme Court of the United States.

The typical caseload involves defending people charged with federal crimes ranging including possession of guns and drugs, immigration offenses, fraud, complex white collar fraud cases, and terrorism. Responsibilities include managing a caseload, preparing pleadings, motions and briefs, reviewing discovery documents, interviewing witnesses, developing litigation strategies, meeting with clients, working with experts, assisting Criminal Justice Act panel attorneys, and appearing on behalf of clients in federal court.

Assistant Federal Public Defenders advocate for clients on their own, or sometimes as part of a team of lawyers, at all stages of criminal representation, from initial appearances and detention hearings to jury trials and sentencing hearings, and, when appropriate, on appeal.

Skilled collaboration, strategic litigation, and compassionate representation are among the values we aim to foster in our office. Because no single person can do this work alone, you will work with experienced lawyers, investigators, paralegals and legal assistants. The ability to work well with a team is mandatory.

The Federal Public Defender's Office is committed to improving diversity in the legal profession. It is critical to our clients' representation that the office be comprised of individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The nature of our work leads us to invest in recruiting colleagues who demonstrate experience with, knowledge of, and sensitivity to the needs of culturally diverse and oppressed populations. We seek candidates with a demonstrated commitment to working with marginalized communities and with clients from a range of backgrounds.

### **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, and are not covered by the Civil Service Reform Act. 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](http://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](mailto:TNM_HR@fd.org) with the subject line "**Assistant Federal Public Defender - 2026-01**":

- 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.*