

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

K. ANTHONY THOMAS, FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER



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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT #2026-03

Assistant Federal Public Defender – Appellate Unit

Permanent Position

Newark, New Jersey (Preferred Duty Station)

Posting: March 12, 2026

Closing Date: April 11, 2026

The Federal Public Defender (FPD) for the District of New Jersey is accepting applications for an Assistant Federal Public Defender (AFPD) in its appellate unit. The preferred duty station for this position is Newark, but other duty stations (Trenton and Camden) may also be considered. The FPD operates under the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3006A(g)(2)(A), to provide legal services by court appointment to individuals unable to afford counsel.

Duties: Appellate AFPDs primarily represent indigent federal defendants in direct criminal appeals and postconviction litigation in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States. Core job duties include researching and analyzing legal issues, drafting briefs, and presenting oral argument. Appellate AFPDs consult with trial AFPDs to raise and preserve legal issues for appeal and assist trial AFPDs with drafting motions and sentencing memoranda. They are also expected to develop and maintain expertise in multiple areas of law, provide training as needed by the office, and serve as a resource to CJA counsel (panel attorneys).

Requirements: Applicants must (1) be a graduate of an accredited law school and admitted to practice and in good standing before the highest court of a state; and (2) be eligible to be licensed to practice in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.

Selection Criteria: Applicants must possess excellent written and oral communication skills. Applicants must have an established capacity or clearly demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense practice, a commitment to the representation of indigent accused persons, and a reputation for integrity. Applicants should be team-oriented and collaborative. Three or more years of state or federal criminal defense experience (including clerkships) is preferred but not required.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and 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 seek lawyers who share this belief and commitment. We encourage individuals who are members of the BIPOC community, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized and underrepresented groups to apply. Above all, we are interested in applicants' talents, dedication and desire to ensure that all individuals, irrespective 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 who are charged with a federal crime, receive effective assistance of counsel, as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Salary and Benefits: The salary of an AFPD is commensurate with qualifications and experience. The position offers federal government employment benefits, including participation in health and life insurance programs, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit). The position is “at will” excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of competitive civil service.

How to Apply: Interested applicants should **email in one pdf document** a letter of interest, a resume, a writing sample, and the names and contact information of three professional references to the attention of:

K. Anthony Thomas, Federal Public Defender
via email to: NJX.AppellateResume@fd.org

If an offer of employment is extended, the applicant must complete a background security investigation including an FBI name search and IRS tax check. Fingerprints and photographs will be taken. Appointment will be subject to the applicant’s successful completion of a security investigation and a favorable report.

No phone calls, please. Only submissions following the required format will be considered. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Federal Public Defender follows an Employee Dispute Resolution Plan approved by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to quality representation, diversity, and inclusion. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.