



FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

Joseph Medici
Federal Public Defender
OFFICES

COLUMBUS | 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1020 • Columbus, Ohio 43215 • 614-469-4141
CINCINNATI | 250 East 5th Street, Suite 350 • Cincinnati, Ohio 45202 • 513-929-4834
DAYTON | 1 South Main Street, Suite 490 • Dayton, Ohio 45402 • 937-225-7687

ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER - CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT Position Announcement 26-002

The Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Ohio is accepting applications for the position of **Assistant Federal Public Defender in our Capital Habeas Unit**, to be stationed in our Columbus office.

Our Capital Habeas Unit represents clients in federal habeas proceedings who have been convicted and sentenced to death. We represent clients starting with their federal habeas petition through every subsequent stage in the proceedings. This includes appeals, clemency, and necessary additional state court litigation. Our mission is to provide our clients with legal services of the highest quality. We zealously and ethically represent the human worth, dignity, and interest of our clients with courage, devotion, and uncompromised advocacy and professionalism.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Assistant Federal Public Defenders (AFPDs) are responsible for both big picture and day-to-day aspects of litigation; determining strategy; maintaining and leading the case team; and ensuring the client is receiving representation in accordance with the rules of professional conduct and prevailing norms of practice. Day to day duties include, but are not limited to, reviewing all case documents, conducting legal research, writing briefs, motions, and pleadings, retaining experts, conducting hearings and arguments, building relationships, and managing case teams. This position requires the ability to work as a team with investigators, paralegals, and other attorneys.

This position requires some overnight out-of-state travel. It also requires local travel. Our cases are subject to strict deadlines set by the court; thus, some evening and weekend work is required.

We hold ourselves to exceptionally high standards and expect the same of every member of our team. Employees are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of professionalism, compassion, clear communication, client-centered judgment, and collaborative teamwork. We value continuous learning and expect employees to actively seek improvement in their skills and knowledge. Team members must be willing to acknowledge mistakes and areas for growth and take personal responsibility for developing proficiency in all skill areas relevant to capital habeas defense. Employees are required to demonstrate good judgement and always maintain a professional appearance and demeanor.

QUALIFICATIONS

The most important qualifications for this position are a strong passion for helping those in need, the ability to communicate complex legal arguments clearly and concisely, and the ability to thrive in a team environment.

A successful candidate will have strong written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills. They will be motivated, creative, resourceful, and able to work with different types of people and personalities with tact, discretion, and compassion. They will also have the ability to work well with others in a team-based approach. Fluency in a foreign language and/or experience with different cultures is a plus.

Karen Savir *Cincinnati Trial Chief* • Stacey MacDonald *Columbus Trial Chief* • Art Mullins *Dayton Trial Chief*
Kevin Schad *Appellate Chief* • Natalie Olmstead *CHU Chief* • Adam Rusnak *Assistant CHU Chief*

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

We are seeking candidates with experience representing clients in capital cases, habeas and/or post-conviction work. An ideal candidate will have experience distilling large records and drafting persuasive legal briefs and pleadings. Experience working in criminal defense or related fields is a strong plus. ***If you do not have criminal defense experience, please explain why you are now interested in working in criminal defense.***

Applicants must be a graduate from an accredited law school and a member in good standing of a state bar and immediately eligible for Federal District Court/Circuit bar admission.

Additionally, applicants for this particular position should have the following:

- Initiative, drive, and the ability to take on a project within their area of expertise without waiting for instruction or a specific assignment.
- A demonstrated commitment to providing high quality representation to indigent defendants.
- Comfort working with clients and their families in both prison and community settings.
- The ability to identify and analyze legal issues from lengthy, complex records.
- The ability to write clearly and concisely.
- The ability to prioritize projects and work both independently and cooperatively.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to build, motivate, and lead a team.
- A demonstrated work history of dependability and responsibility.
- The ability to work in a high-demand, high-volume law office.
- Advanced skills in Microsoft Office (especially Outlook, Teams, Word, and Excel), and Adobe.
- Proficiently in legal research, including the use of Lexis and Westlaw.
- Fact management and document management skills.
- A valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle, as local travel will be necessary.

ABOUT US

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Ohio provides the highest quality legal representation in criminal cases to persons who cannot afford to hire a private attorney. Through our Trial and Appellate Units, we represent people who have been accused of federal criminal offenses from the onset of their case, through the trial and appellate phases. Through our Capital Habeas Unit, we represent people sentenced to death in Ohio and around the country, through federal habeas and all subsequent proceedings.

This opening offers the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to important, complex, and cutting-edge legal work. Our cases present some of the most complicated questions in criminal law, requiring extensive factual, interpersonal, socio-historical, and legal research and development. At the same time, they embody the most urgent moral imperative of our justice system: that all people, even those convicted of the most serious crimes, deserve zealous representation at all stages of their case. Our work reflects the truth that our clients, whatever their crimes, are unique individual human beings, that they are more than the worst thing they have ever done.

We utilize teams with interdisciplinary skill sets that ensure compassionate and comprehensive representation. We are attorneys, paralegals, investigators, office administrators, and information technology specialists who prioritize centering our representation around our clients and their needs.

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

Our office values people with a wide range of experience and perspectives, and works to foster 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 varied backgrounds and experiences. We seek team members who share that belief and commitment. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to the office because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences. We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, and persistence, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully – no matter the allegation or circumstance.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary of the successful applicant will be commensurate with the person's qualifications and years of experience. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit). The position offers federal employment benefits, including paid vacation, paid sick time, paid holidays, health insurance, life insurance, retirement plan, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (similar to a 401k). Some telework is available, consistent with office policy, court obligations, and position duties. Assistant Federal Public Defenders may not engage in the private practice of law.

HOW TO APPLY

Qualified applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, one writing sample, not to exceed 10 pages, and three professional references, in PDF format, to OHS_employment@fd.org, by Monday, March 9, 2026. Please combine the application into a single PDF. The cover letter **must** explain why you are interested in representing people on death row and how your professional and/or life experiences qualify you to succeed in this position. In your application, please feel free to note which pronouns you use.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

All application information is subject to verification. Appointment to the position is contingent upon a background investigation including an FBI fingerprint check. Employees of the Federal Defender are members of the judicial branch of government; they are considered 'at will' and can be terminated with or without cause.

The Federal Public Defender for the Southern District of Ohio is an equal opportunity employer. We are an inclusive office and seek applications from a diverse group of qualified individuals. We provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities.