

Position Announcement 26-30
RESEARCH AND WRITING SPECIALIST
Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas (El Paso)

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the Western District of Texas is accepting applications for a research and writing specialist to be stationed in the El Paso office. The Federal Public Defender operates under authority of the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. 3006A, to provide defense services in federal criminal cases and related matters by appointment from the court to individuals unable to afford counsel.

Requirements. The research and writing specialist position is an attorney position. Applicants must be: (1) a graduate of an accredited law school; (2) admitted to practice law in Texas or by the highest court of another state; and (3) admitted to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas within one year after employment begins. At least three years of specialized experience is preferred. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation, including but not limited to an FBI name and fingerprint check.

Duties. The primary duties of a research and writing specialist include: (1) drafting motions, memoranda, briefs, and petitions to be filed in the U.S. District Court; and (2) consulting with attorneys on legal issues arising in discovery, motion practice, trial, sentencing, and appeal. A research and writing specialist may have to perform general paralegal duties, and other duties as assigned. The research and writing specialist is not an assistant federal public defender and does not sign pleadings or make court appearances. The position requires occasional travel.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have strong legal research and word processing skills, the ability to analyze legal issues from complex records, and write clearly and concisely. Applicants should also 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 must be able to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, and court and agency personnel. Finally, applicants must also be team-oriented and possess skills for collaboration, strategic litigation, compassionate representation, and unique approaches to the issues affecting our clients. Appellate writing experience or experience in handling federal criminal cases is preferred.

Salary and Benefits. The starting salary of a research and writing specialist will be commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the applicant, within a range from \$74,678 (JSP-11, Step 1) to \$147,945 (JSP-15, Step 1) per annum. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. The position offers federal government employment benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

How to Apply. Qualified persons may apply by sending a letter of interest (mentioning announcement 26-30), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample. Legal experience should be described in detail. Send all required documents in a single PDF document named with applicant's "last name, first name-Announcement 26-30 RAWs" by email to TXW_Employment@fd.org. Electronic submissions sent directly to the Defender will not be considered. For applicants with disabilities, this organization provides reasonable accommodations, which are decided on a case-by-case basis. To request a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact personnel administrator Victoria B. Longoria at (210) 981-2081. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced April 21, 2026, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

The Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer.