

Position Announcement 26-31
ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER (Appellate)
Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas (San Antonio)

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the Western District of Texas is accepting applications for an assistant federal public defender to be stationed in the San Antonio office, preferably, or another office within the Western District of Texas. 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. An assistant federal public defender must be (1) a graduate of an accredited law school; (2) admitted to practice before a state bar, but a Texas bar license is strongly preferred; and (3) licensed to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court 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. An Assistant Federal Public Defender (Appellate) represents clients charged with and convicted of federal criminal offenses under the Criminal Justice Act. Regular responsibilities include working with clients; managing a caseload; reviewing complex case files and records on appeal; identifying relevant legal issues; providing trial support; preparing pleadings, briefings, and petitions; and maintaining in-depth and current knowledge of appellate practices and case law. The position requires travel for oral arguments. Federal public defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

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 salary of an assistant federal public defender is commensurate with that of an assistant U.S. attorney with similar qualifications and experience. 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 26-31), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample. Appellate experience should be described in detail. Send all required documents in a single PDF document named with applicant's "last name, first name-Announcement 26-31 AFD Appellate" 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 Christopher Schmidt at (210) 981-2081. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced April 23, 2026, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

The Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer.