

Position Announcement 26-33
CAPITAL MITIGATION SPECIALIST – CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT
Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas (Austin)

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the Western District of Texas is now accepting applications for the position of Capital Mitigation Specialist for the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) in Austin, Texas. The CHU represents indigent, death-sentenced Texas prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings in the four United States District Courts in Texas, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court.

Requirements. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. An advanced or graduate degree in social work is strongly preferred. A degree in or related to a field such as anthropology, education, human development, journalism, psychology, sociology, or criminal justice is preferred. All candidates must be proficient with the use of a computer, with an emphasis in Word and other Windows-based applications and internet research. This position may require work on holidays, evenings, and weekends, as the nature of the cases require. Frequent and extended travel may also be required. Prior federal court litigation experience and Spanish-language fluency are preferred for this position. The full position qualifications statement with position description is available upon request.

Duties. The Capital Mitigation Specialist will perform tasks such as the following:

- Assist attorneys in coordinating and integrating evidence of a client's life history with the defense strategy in the guilt or innocence phase;
- Conduct ongoing, exhaustive and independent investigation of every aspect of the client's character, life history, record, and any circumstances of the offense, or other factors, which may provide a basis for a sentence less than death;
- Conduct multiple, in-person interviews in a culturally competent manner, with the client and relevant persons familiar with the client's life history, or family history or who would support a sentence less than death;
- Provide attorneys with documentary evidence of the investigation using genealogies, social history reports, chronologies, and reports on other relevant subjects such as cultural, socioeconomic, environmental, racial, and religious issues in the client's life;
- Assist attorneys in the selection and preparation of witnesses who will testify or consult with the defense team, including both experts and lay witnesses;
- Write clearly and be able to present complex and interrelated concepts and ideas.
- Gather and analyze documentary records of the client, family members, and other relevant third parties;
- Assist attorneys in preparing and gathering demonstrative evidence;
- Advise attorneys on appropriate mental experts;
- Provide supervision, education, and training to interns and others; and
- Perform all other tasks as assigned.

Selection Criteria. The successful candidate will have a commitment to providing quality representation to indigent defendants and have a reputation for integrity. They will have a working knowledge of the criminal justice and correctional systems, mental health and other social services, and psychology and psychological testing. Excellent interviewing and writing skills are essential for the position, as is the ability to locate, obtain, review, analyze, and summarize relevant records. Successful applicants will be able to prioritize projects and work both independently and cooperatively with attorneys, investigators, and office staff as an essential member of the capital defense team at all stages of representation.

Salary and Benefits. The starting salary of a Capital Mitigation Specialist will be commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the applicant, within a range of \$76,777 (JSP-11, Step 1) to \$129,311 (JSP-14, Step 1) per annum. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. This position offers federal government employment benefits, including participation in health and life insurance, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

How to Apply. Qualified persons may apply by forwarding a letter of interest addressed to the Federal Public Defender, Maureen Scott Franco (mentioning accountment 26-33), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample. Send the completed application **in a single PDF document named with applicant's "last name, first name-Announcement 26-33 CHU Mitigation Spc"** 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 accommodation, which is decided on a case-by-case basis. To request reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact Administrative Officer Angela Kessel at (210) 981-2085. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced May 7, 2026, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer.