



POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT 26-45
ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas

Position: CHU Research and Writing Specialist
Location: Austin, Texas
Salary: \$77,777 - \$152,103

Position Type: Full-Time
Opening Date: July 7, 2026
Closing Date: Until Filled

The Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Texas is accepting applications for the position of Research and Writing Specialist, to be stationed in the Capital Habeas Unit in Austin.

POSITION DUTIES

The Research and Writing Specialist is an attorney who provides advanced research and writing on claims for federal habeas corpus relief by indigent, Texas death-sentenced prisoners in the four U.S. District Courts in Texas, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Regular responsibilities include:

- Perform advanced research and writing, review and analyze complex records, and help identify claims and evidentiary needs.
- Collaborative work with attorneys, mitigation specialists, investigators, and experts.
- Close and regular contact with clients.
- Conduct field work, including gathering records and conducting investigations.
- Keep current on developments in habeas corpus, criminal procedure, and relevant issues in forensic science and mental health relevant. Analyze legal decisions, statutes, and related materials; prepare summaries, digests, and research compilations.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Graduate of an accredited law school and eligible to be licensed in the relevant federal courts.
- Strong legal research and word-processing skills; clear and concise writing.
- Ability to analyze complex legal issues and to set priorities to meet critical deadlines.
- Established capacity of clearly demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense.
- Ability to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, and court and agency personnel, which includes developing cultural competencies.
- Have strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively in a team-based practice as well as independently.
- Employment contingent on a satisfactory background check (FBI name & fingerprints).

BENEFITS

- Retirement benefits under the Federal Employees Retirement System.
- Optional participation in Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB).
- Optional participation in Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP).
- Optional participation in Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FGLI).
- Position is excepted service, without competitive civil service tenure.

HOW TO APPLY

- Cover letter and resume.
- Three professional references with their contact information.
- [Form AO-78](#) – All sections of the AO-78 must be completed in full, with dates in the following format: mm/dd/yyyy.
- Apply at [Openings at Federal Public Defender, Western District of Texas](#) or <https://federal-public-defender-western-district-of-texas.breezy.hr/>. Attach your cover letter, resume, references and the AO-78 in one pdf. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

To request a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact personnel administrator Christopher Schmidt at (210) 981-2081.

The Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer.