



OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL DEFENDER
Eastern District of California
801 I Street, Third Floor
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 498-5700 FAX (916) 498-5710

HEATHER E. WILLIAMS
Federal Defender

PEGGY SASSO
First Assistant Defender

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT #26-010 REPOSTED
ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDER - FRESNO

The Office of the Federal Defender for the Eastern District of California is accepting applications for a full-time **Assistant Federal Defender** position for its **Fresno Office**. The Federal Defender represents indigent persons in federal criminal cases and related court matters under the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A.

WHY THIS OFFICE

Our Assistant Federal Defenders provide holistic, professional legal representation to financially eligible individuals charged with, or under investigation for, any federal criminal offense from misdemeanors to felonies. We litigate for our clients in the United States District Court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court, and, on occasion, in California's state courts. Our AFDs carry an extensive, varied caseload through all litigation stages with room to explore novel legal and factual arguments in defending our clients. We practice at the highest levels, enjoying excellent reputations for personal and professional integrity. Our Office boasts a collegial culture, strongly encouraging teamwork and collaborative discussion.

THE PLACE

Fresno sits in the heart of California's Central Valley. It is the state's fifth-largest city and one of its most livable. Known for its affordability, vibrant arts scene, and diverse culture, Fresno offers a welcoming blend of urban living and outdoor adventure. Its proximity to Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks makes it the ideal home base for nature enthusiasts. The city features numerous museums, theaters, live music venues, and a strong commitment to the arts, contributing to its lively cultural atmosphere. With a Mediterranean climate, residents enjoy warm, dry summers and mild winters. Surrounded by rich agricultural land, Fresno is also recognized for its abundant farms, fresh produce, and local farmers markets. Fresno places a high value on education and is home to California State University -Fresno, Fresno City College, and strong private and public school systems including Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts. Additionally, California's central coast, acclaimed wineries, San Francisco, and Los Angeles are all within easy reach, making Fresno a well-connected and appealing place to live.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

We seek a driven attorney for client-centered representations, with a passion for motion work and a commitment to understanding our clients' histories, working with our staff social worker to set our clients up for future success, however that may be defined. As a Trial Attorney, you will represent clients in all stages of federal criminal proceedings, including trial, and sentencing, and have an opportunity for post-conviction litigation where appropriate. Whether you are handling misdemeanors (from Yosemite National Park, U.S. Forest Service lands, military bases, or the Veterans and Social Security Centers) or felonies, you will explore complex legal and factual issues, develop litigation strategies, research, draft and argue motions, and appear frequently in court telling your clients' stories from case start in arguing for their release through to acquittal or sentencing. Throughout each representation, we regularly communicate with our clients, experts, family members, and witnesses. Collaboration is key: you will work closely with colleagues, including investigators and paralegals, in a supportive, team-oriented environment.

REQUIREMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for our Assistant Federal Defender position, all applicants must either be admitted to the California State Bar or be a member in good standing of another state's bar and plan to be admitted to the California Bar within two years of starting. We encourage you to describe your legal experiences, especially in criminal, legal

aid, immigration, and/or civil rights cases. Prior experience or clerkships welcomed but not required. This position requires travel.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Our ideal candidate has excellent legal writing and oral advocacy skills, an ability to work collaboratively in a team, with effective organizational skills including the ability to prioritize. Excellent communication with clients, colleagues, staff, government and court personnel is required. Spanish-language proficiency is a plus.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Appointment to this position is contingent upon successfully completing an FBI background check. Federal Public Defender employees are members of the federal government's judicial branch and considered "at will." This position is an excepted service, so carries no tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. Candidates must be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident in the process of applying for citizenship. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit)

SALARY & BENEFITS

This is a full-time position with pay based on qualifications and years of legal experience since graduation from law school. Salary ranges match those of Assistant US Attorneys with similar experience. A comprehensive benefits package includes health and life insurance, vision and dental benefits, flexible spending accounts, 13 days of paid annual leave (annual leave accrual increases over time), 13 days of paid sick leave, paid leave for all 12 federal holidays, and participation in the Federal Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan (with up to 5% government matching contributions).

Telework up to 2 days per week is available for this position.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

In one PDF document, please submit a letter of interest, résumé, a writing sample, three references, and a completed ***Application for Judicial Branch Employment form (AO78)***, http://www.cae-fpd.org/AO_78.pdf, to:

Heather Williams, Federal Defender
Attn: Human Resources
at the following email: cae_hr@fd.org

Email subject line should read: **2026-10 – Assistant Federal Defender**

This position was announced on September 1, 2026, is open until filled, and is subject to the availability of funding. Preference given to applications received by **September 25, 2026**. Applicants will be notified before we contact listed references.

Commitment to Fair Hiring: Our office values fair hiring and an equitable workplace. The FPD seeks applications from a diverse group of qualified individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, nation of origin, culture, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, languages spoken, veteran status, disability, experiences, and religion. We encourage applications from members of the BIPOC community, people who have been affected by the criminal legal system, and people from other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify our Personnel Administrator, Lupe Hernandez, at lupe_hernandez@fd.org.