

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT 26-12
Mitigation Specialist – Trial Unit
Office of the Federal Public Defender
District of Arizona, Phoenix

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the District of Arizona is accepting applications for a mitigation specialist to be stationed in Phoenix. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. The federal defender organization 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. The organization has staffed offices in Phoenix, Tucson, Yuma, and Flagstaff.

Requirements. To qualify for this position, a bachelor's degree in social science or services and three years of specialized experience in social science or research, with at least two years of mitigation experience is required. A master's degree in social science or services is strongly preferred. Qualifying experience should involve performing the following types of duties: conducting ongoing, exhaustive, and independent investigations 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 lesser sentence; and maintaining complete and accurate files, including records that may assist successor counsel. Heavy and extended travel is required. The applicant must be a U.S. citizen. Employment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation.

Duties. The mitigation specialist will assist attorneys across the district in investigating, analyzing, developing, and presenting mitigation evidence in the life history of clients. They will gather and summarize social history records, conduct interviews with anyone who may have relevant knowledge about the client's early childhood development, education, and employment, as well as their medical and mental health histories. Other duties include consulting with experts; developing/maintaining relationships with clients, their family members, local social service providers, and pretrial service officers; and any other duties 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 immigration, 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.

Salary and Benefits. Starting salary will be commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the applicant, within a range from JSP-11, Step 1 to JSP-13, Step 1, currently yielding \$78,117 to \$111,338 per annum. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. The position does include regular government employment benefits including health and life insurance, retirement, telework opportunities and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit). All positions are at will and are subject to the availability of funds.

How to Apply. Qualified persons may apply by sending via e-mail a letter of interest, resume, and representative writing sample. References will be required from candidates selected for an interview. Applicable experience should be described in detail. Send completed application to the Personnel Administrator, Federal Public Defender, District of Arizona, at azx_hr@fd.org. Announced February 5, 2026; Closes: February 20, 2026.

The Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.