

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER (PIERRE)

The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota is seeking an attorney to join our branch office in **Pierre, South Dakota**. Our office provides high-quality, client-centered representation to individuals charged with federal crimes who cannot afford retained counsel, pursuant to the Criminal Justice Act.

Why Our Office: The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota is a collegial, mission-driven office committed to excellent defense work. Our practice includes regular contested hearings and trial opportunities, providing meaningful courtroom experience grounded in careful preparation and sound judgment. The office also represents clients in cases arising in and near tribal communities, offering experience with Indian Country jurisdiction and the distinct legal, factual, and cultural considerations those cases present. Attorneys are supported by experienced investigators, paralegals, and administrative staff, and are encouraged to practice with independence, creativity, and professionalism. We value collaboration, mentorship, and thoughtful case strategy, while trusting attorneys to exercise sound judgment and develop their own advocacy style. The work is demanding and meaningful, and our culture emphasizes respect, integrity, and mutual support—for our clients and for one another.

About Pierre: As South Dakota's capital, Pierre offers a unique professional environment paired with an outstanding quality of life. Located along the Missouri River, the city features affordable housing, excellent schools, short commutes, and abundant outdoor recreation. It is an ideal setting for building a meaningful federal defense practice while enjoying a balanced, connected, and family-friendly lifestyle.

Position Description: Assistant Federal Public Defenders provide zealous, ethical, and professional representation in a fast-paced and challenging environment. Responsibilities include managing a federal criminal caseload from initial appearance through disposition; meeting and advising clients; interviewing witnesses and family members; developing release plans; reviewing and analyzing discovery; drafting pleadings, motions, and briefs; developing litigation strategies; working with investigators and experts; advising Criminal Justice Act panel attorneys; and conducting in-court advocacy at all stages of litigation. Some travel is required. Attorneys in this office may not engage in the private practice of law.

Required Qualifications: (1) Graduation from an accredited law school; (2) Admission in good standing to practice before the highest court of a state or the District of Columbia; (3) Ability to practice before the United States District Court for the District of South Dakota upon appointment. Attorneys who are not members of the South Dakota Bar may begin practice while completing South Dakota bar admission requirements, which must be satisfied within 12 months of the start date; and (4) United States citizenship or authorization to work in the United States.

Above all, we seek applicants with a demonstrated commitment to indigent defense and the ability to work collaboratively in a team-oriented environment. Courtroom experience, creativity, sound judgment, and strong research and writing skills are highly valued.

Salary and Benefits: Salary is commensurate with experience and ranges from **\$76,748 to \$180,078**. This is a full-time position with comprehensive federal benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is paid bi-weekly via direct deposit. Final offers of employment are contingent upon funding availability and successful completion of a background investigation.

How to Apply: Applicants should submit a letter of interest, résumé, three references, and a recent writing sample **combined into a single PDF** to SDX_JOBS@fd.org. The position is open until filled, and applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. More than one position may be filled from this announcement.

The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities encouraged to apply.

Position Announcement #26-03