

FEDERAL DEFENDERS OF SAN DIEGO, INC.

THE COMMUNITY DEFENDER ORGANIZATION FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Habeas Attorney

Location: San Diego, CA

Application Deadline: July 1, 2026

Posted: June 17, 2026

Office Website: www.fdsdi.com

Salary Range: AD-21 (\$87,671) to AD-29 (\$197,100)

Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc. (FDSDI) is seeking one or more full-time attorneys for a one-year position focused primarily on federal habeas proceedings under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The position would also assist attorneys and investigators prepare for and conduct the new arraignment calendar for clients charged with new criminal cases in federal court.

FDSDI is the Federal Community Defender Organization for the Southern District of California, with offices in San Diego and El Centro. We are appointed to represent low-income individuals charged with federal offenses, as well as indigent persons detained in state and immigration custody. We are an independent office funded through a sustaining grant awarded by the federal judiciary pursuant to the Criminal Justice Act.

Our location near the U.S.–Mexico border significantly shapes our caseload. The majority of our clients face drug and immigration-related charges, as well as a wide range of other federal offenses, including fraud, firearms offenses, bank robbery, counterfeiting, assault, and other serious charges. Because we are in a district with an immigration detention facility, we are also increasingly appointed to represent detainees who have filed petitions under § 2241.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Under the supervision of the Appellate Chief, the Habeas Attorney will:

- Conduct interviews related to § 2241 claims and new arraignments.
- Handle magistrate and district court hearings for § 2241 claims and new arraignments.
- Conduct legal research and draft § 2241 pleadings with a high level of accuracy and clarity.
- Collaborate with attorneys, investigators, paralegals, and other defense team members to support effective advocacy for § 2241 and new arraignment clients.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- Membership in good standing with the bar of any state.
- Strong legal research, writing, and analytical skills.
- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple matters and meet deadlines in a fast-paced environment.
- Commitment to public defense and client-centered representation.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Prior experience (pre or post-bar) in criminal defense, federal litigation, and/or immigration law.
- Membership in the California Bar.

Salary and Benefits:

Salary will be commensurate with experience and is within the AD pay scale, ranging from AD-21 (\$87,671) to AD-29 (\$197,100). The position does include employee benefits including health and life insurance as well as a 401k plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit). This position is at will and is subject to the availability of funds. Employment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation. Telework is not available.

Accessibility:

We are committed to an inclusive and accessible application process. If you need an accommodation due to a disability during any stage of the application or interview process, please contact our Personnel Administrator at Kym_Bryant@fd.org. If hired, we are dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to support your success and ensure equal access to opportunities in the workplace.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:

Our office values diversity, is committed to equity and inclusion, and aspires to create a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, openness, and humility that honors the people we represent. We believe representation is better when members of the defense team have diverse backgrounds and experiences. In our hiring, we seek individuals who share this belief and commitment. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to the office because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences.

How to Apply:

Interested applicants are invited to apply by submitting a single pdf document that includes a cover letter, resume, and three references via email to the attention of:

Kasha Castillo, Executive Director

CAS_AttorneyCareers@fd.org

Subject: Habeas Attorney Position – San Diego

Hiring Timeline:

We value transparency in our hiring process and want applicants to know what to expect. Below are the key dates:

- **Application Deadline:** July 1, 2026 (priority consideration given to applications received by this date; applications will be accepted until the position is filled).
- **Interviews:** Conducted on a rolling basis.
- **Anticipated Start Date:** The start date is flexible based on candidate availability. We anticipate onboarding the selected candidate as soon as practicable, and no later than August 31, 2026.