

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota

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Federal Public Defender

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
CHIEF RAPID CITY TRIAL COUNSEL

The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota seeks an experienced attorney to serve as **Chief Rapid City Trial Counsel**, a senior leadership role within the defender organization. This attorney will supervise Assistant Federal Public Defenders assigned to the Rapid City branch office while also providing zealous, independent legal representation to clients. The position is equivalent to a Third Level Supervisor within the federal defender system and reports directly to the Federal Public Defender.

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 Rapid City: Rapid City is the principal population center of western South Dakota. Located at the eastern edge of the Black Hills, it sits where forested hills meet open prairies and offers immediate access to nationally recognized parks, public lands, and outdoor recreation. The area is known for its natural beauty, mild summers, and four-season climate, with opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, and skiing within minutes of town. Rapid City also features affordable housing, short commutes, a growing arts and food scene, and strong schools, making it a highly livable community for individuals and families alike. It is an exceptional setting for attorneys seeking meaningful federal practice in a place that offers both professional engagement and an unmatched natural environment.

Position Description: The **Chief Rapid City Trial Counsel** is responsible for both direct representation and supervision of Assistant Federal Public Defenders in the Rapid City branch office. Duties include:

- Providing zealous, ethical, and professional representation in federal criminal cases, including courtroom advocacy at all stages of litigation.
- Supervising Assistant Federal Public Defenders and legal staff to ensure prompt, courteous, and effective representation of clients.
- Providing mentorship, case-strategy guidance, and regular performance feedback to attorneys.
- Working with the attorney leadership team to ensure consistency of representation among the branch offices.

- Ensuring attorneys have access to adequate support staff, investigative resources, and expert services
- Recommending actions and making decisions that affect the legal operations and professional standards of the branch office.
- Identifying, communicating, and positively resolving internal problems which might negatively impact the operation of the defender organization.
- Managing attorney caseloads to ensure equal distribution of attorney resources to the benefit of the Office's clients and assigns cases and/or work accordingly.

Some travel is required.

Required Qualifications:

- Graduation from an accredited law school
- Admission in good standing before the highest court of a state, territory, or the District of Columbia
- Eligibility to practice before the United States District Court for the District of South Dakota upon appointment (Attorneys not currently admitted may begin practice while completing South Dakota bar admission requirements, which must be met within 12 months).
- United States citizenship or authorization to work in the United States.
- Significant professional experience in criminal law.
- Excellent research, writing, litigation, and trial-advocacy skills.
- Ability to work effectively in a collaborative, team-oriented environment.
- Previous experience supervising attorneys preferred but not required.

Salary and Benefits: Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications and falls within the ranges authorized for AD-35 supervisory attorneys (\$154,743-\$197,100). This is a full-time position with federal benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is paid bi-weekly via direct deposit. Final hiring is subject to funding availability and a favorable background investigation.

How to Apply: Applicants should submit a **single PDF** containing:

- A letter of interest
- Resume
- Three references
- A recent writing sample

E-mail the PDF to SDX_JOBS@fd.org with the subject line, "**Chief Rapid City Trial Counsel – Position Announcement 26-10**". Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

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 #26-10