

**FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEFENDER OFFICE  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA  
FEDERAL COURT DIVISION  
CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT

**LISA EVANS LEWIS**  
Chief Federal Defender

The Curtis - Suite 545 West  
601 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
Phone: 215.928.0520  
Fax: 215.928.0826

**JENNIFER CHICCARINO**  
First Assistant

**JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT**

**INVESTIGATOR/MITIGATION SPECIALIST**

**At least one position**

**Open Date: April 15, 2026**

**Close Date: When Filled**

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has at least one opening in the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) for an Investigator/Mitigation Specialist. The CHU represents death-sentenced prisoners in twenty jurisdictions throughout the United States in all stages of federal habeas corpus proceedings. Our office is located in Philadelphia's vibrant Center City district, in the historic Curtis Building. Philadelphia, one of America's most preeminent historical cities, is rich in culture, entertainment, and history. Here you will find landmark cobblestone streets, 68 national historical landmarks, approximately 100 museums and cultural institutions, over 4,000 murals, and a plethora of international fare and diverse cuisine.

The CHU Investigator/Mitigation Specialist is required to play an integral role in the investigation and presentation of both guilt phase and penalty phase issues, including the development of mitigating evidence. The CHU Investigator/Mitigation Specialist is responsible for supporting the development of all aspects of the Unit's cases, including locating and interviewing witnesses with relevant information about the crime and the client's family, background, and mental health; locating and retrieving documents and other evidence; serving subpoenas; and assisting with the preparation and presentation of evidentiary hearings. CHU Investigators engage in extensive travel throughout the country to support the work and to meet with clients. CHU Investigators work collaboratively with each other and with attorneys, paralegals, and administrative staff on their cases. CHU Investigators also work with members of the Office's other practice groups (including the Non-Capital Habeas, Trial, Appeals, and Capital Trial Units) to provide the highest level of legal representation to the office's clients.

Candidates must possess substantial investigative and/or mitigation experience. Experience with the investigation and development of defense mitigation presentations in capital trials or post-conviction cases or with mental health or social work issues is preferred but not required. Other desired qualifications include post-secondary education in relevant fields, knowledge of federal and state court systems, and familiarity with federal habeas corpus or post-conviction litigation and/or complex federal civil or criminal litigation. Candidates must possess excellent oral and written communication skills, interpersonal skills, and the ability to work well in a team-based approach.

Candidates must possess skill using electronic investigative tools and technology. Fluency (oral and written) in the Spanish language is helpful but not required.

Candidates must possess a valid driver's license and insurance and own/operate a personal vehicle that is available for business purposes. The position requires that the employee occasionally lift and/or move up to 25 pounds and spend extended periods driving or riding in a car.

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and three references to [Federal Community Defender Office Careers](#). Candidates will be interviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. Applications received by Monday, May 4, 2026 will be given priority. Salary will be based upon experience consistent with federal guidelines and regulations and within a range from JSP Grade 11, Step 1 (\$82,289), to JSP Grade 14, Step 10 (\$180,178) per year.

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity employer. We are dedicated to promoting a professional work environment that supports and respects all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.