



*Office of the*  
**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
*NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA*  
227 N. Bronough Street, Ste. 4200  
Tallahassee, FL 32301-1300  
(850) 942-8818 Fax: 942-8809

**JOSEPH F. DEBELDER**  
Federal Public Defender

**LINDA McDERMOTT**  
CHU Chief

## **POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **RESEARCH & WRITING SPECIALIST – CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT**

**Posted:** September 4, 2026

**Closing Date:** Applications accepted will be considered on a rolling basis.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Florida is accepting applications for multiple in-person or remote Research & Writing Specialist positions in the Capital Habeas Unit (CHU). The positions are temporary, not to exceed two years. The CHU represents indigent, death-sentenced prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings.

**Job Description:** CHU Attorneys provide advanced legal research, writing, and case development advocacy. Attorneys typically work on large teams within the CHU as well as collaborate with lawyers and investigators in the Capital Collateral Regional Counsel, CHUs in other districts, law firms, and non-profit organizations engaged in capital litigation in Florida. Further duties of the role include analyzing the latest developments in habeas corpus and criminal law and applying this knowledge to case strategies; drafting petitions, motions, memoranda of law, and appellate briefs; analyzing transcripts and other records; maintaining client contact; assisting with case investigation by digesting records and interviewing witnesses; and working with expert witnesses. The position would also be involved in a special project related to Chapter 154 of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

**Our Office:** We value serving our clients through skilled collaboration, compassionate advocacy, and creativity. We seek individuals with resiliency, initiative, and enthusiasm. In recruiting employees, the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Florida hopes to reach applicants of all manner of backgrounds and perspectives. In selecting employees, the Office will not consider the applicant's race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, or political affiliation. Selection decisions will be based solely on job-related merit.

**Requirements:** Applicants must be a United States citizen or eligible to work in the United States. Applicants must possess excellent legal research and writing skills and a strong work ethic. Bar admission and good standing in a state bar, including the District of Columbia, are required. Additionally, membership in, or eligibility to be admitted to, the FLND Bar is required. The willingness to engage in overnight travel and work long and non-traditional hours is required, as is a valid driver's license. We will consider applications from current 3Ls and recent graduates who have passed a Bar examination. Preference will be given to applicants with experience in one of the following areas: capital litigation, federal habeas corpus litigation, state postconviction proceedings, appellate practice and procedure, criminal defense, or complex federal civil or criminal litigation. A background in mental health and/or social work is also helpful but not required. Maturity, good judgment, and the ability to treat others with respect in times of high stress are necessary for this position. Empathy and dedication to the cause of our clients are essential traits.

**Salary and Benefits:** Positions are subject to approval of funding. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications. This position comes with federal employee benefits, including health and life insurance and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) pension, Social Security, and a Thrift Savings Plan. We observe Federal holidays and provide generous annual and personal leave. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

**Application Process:** To apply for a Research & Writing Specialist position, applicants should email a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and three references **in .pdf format** to FLN\_Resumes@fd.org, and a copy to john\_abatecola@fd.org. Please address the cover letter to Linda McDermott, CHU Chief. The email subject should be as follows: CHU Research & Writing Specialist Application.

Employment is conditioned upon a favorable background check.

**The Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Florida is an equal opportunity employer.**

FY 2026-018