

**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
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**CUAUHTEMOC ORTEGA**

*Federal Public Defender*

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*Los Angeles Trial Chief*

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*Santa Ana Branch Chief*

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*Riverside Branch Chief*

**MARGARET A. FARRAND**

*Appeals Chief*

**JONATHAN AMINOFF**

*Non-Capital Habeas Chief*

**NEHA CHRISTERNA**

*Collaborative Courts Chief*

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## Vacancy Announcement

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**Position:** Appellate Attorney

**Location:** Los Angeles, CA

**Deadline:** March 22, 2026

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The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for a full-time attorney position in its appellate unit, stationed in Los Angeles, California. The appellate unit is committed to the pursuit of justice by aggressively advocating in federal court for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of individuals who are convicted of crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer.

**Job Duties:** Appellate attorneys primarily represent indigent federal defendants in direct criminal appeals. Core job duties include counseling clients with respect to their appeals and preparing briefs and presenting oral argument in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Appeal unit attorneys also assist trial attorneys in complex cases and represent indigent habeas petitioners in the district court and in the Ninth Circuit. They are expected to develop and maintain expertise in multiple areas of law and provide training and oversight as needed by the office.

**Requirements:** All applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and be members in good standing of the California Bar or must be willing to sit for the next California Bar exam. Preference will be given to applicants with at least three years of experience in state or federal criminal law or in appeals, and federal judicial clerkship experience.

Varying hours including nights, weekends, and holidays may be required. A background investigation is required as a condition of employment. In line with current federal appropriations law, applicants must be United States citizens or permanent residents seeking citizenship as described here: <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/search-judiciary-jobs/citizenship-requirements-employment-judiciary>.

**Selection Criteria:** Candidates must have a demonstrated commitment to indigent criminal defense and/or public interest law; must have superior oral and written communication skills;

possess excellent research skills; have the ability to manage a high-volume caseload; and work well in teams.

**Salary/Benefits:** This is a full-time, at-will position. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience and is subject to direct deposit. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and a Thrift Savings Plan. After successful completion of a probationary period, eligible employees may elect to telework up to two days per week, subject to certain conditions. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

**How to Apply:** Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, two representative writing samples (limited to 25 - 30 pages each), and three references through our website at <https://fpdcdca.org/careers/current-openings/>. We will accept applications until March 22, 2026, or until filled. Interviews will occur on a rolling basis and the open position may be filled before that date. Priority will be given to early applicants. The Federal Public Defender's Office may fill current and future positions from this vacancy announcement. Please, no phone calls.

*The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is committed to equal opportunity in the workplace. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.*