

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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Vacancy Announcement

Position: Capital Habeas Investigator
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Deadline: October 23, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for full-time investigator positions in its Capital Habeas Unit (CHU), stationed in Los Angeles, California. The CHU advocates for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of indigent persons sentenced to death. We provide the highest quality representation in post-conviction proceedings through diversity of experience, collaborative and thorough case development, focused litigation strategies, and skilled courtroom advocacy.

Job Duties: CHU investigators are critical contributors in the preparation, development, and advancement of assigned cases. This position requires excellent communication skills, the ability to work both independently and collaboratively, and a thorough understanding of fact and mitigation investigation. Duties include, but are not limited to: Reviewing and analyzing discovery materials and voluminous case files; developing comprehensive investigation plans based on file review and case strategy; reviewing and requesting records; identifying, locating, and interviewing witnesses in a culturally competent manner; preparing clear, detailed, and comprehensive written reports of investigative findings; drafting declarations and other case-related documents and/or timelines; developing and maintaining effective working relationships with clients; assisting with hearings; testifying in court (as needed).

Requirements: All applicants must have graduated from an accredited school with a bachelor's degree. Extensive relevant experience may substitute a bachelor's degree. A background in law, social work, or mental health is a plus. Excellent organizational skills and a high level of computer literacy are required. Applicants must be able to manage an assigned caseload and set priorities to meet critical deadlines. Applicants must be proficient in conducting OSINT investigation to creatively develop both fact and mitigation evidence. Adaptation to dynamic cyber environments by keeping skill sets current is a requirement of the position. Familiarity with forensic discovery applications is a plus. The ability to speak, read, and write in Spanish is strongly preferred, but not required. This position may call for extensive and overnight travel. Applicants must possess a valid driver's license and a working vehicle with appropriate insurance. Varying hours including nights, weekends, and holidays may be required.

A background investigation is a condition of employment. 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: Successful applicants demonstrate a commitment to the defense of death sentenced individuals; must have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills; must be able to develop a rapport with people of different backgrounds; can work independently and take initiative; are capable of analyzing and communicating complex information; have the drive to broaden the depths of their knowledge; 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. After successful completion of a probationary period, eligible employees may elect to telework up to two days per week, subject to certain conditions. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and a Thrift Savings Plan. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

How to Apply: Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, three writing samples, and three references through our website at <https://fpdcdca.org/careers/current-openings/>. We will accept applications until October 23, 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 an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.