

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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JONATHAN C. AMINOFF

Non-Capital Habeas Chief

NEHA CHRISTERNA

Collaborative Courts Chief

Vacancy Announcement

Position: Non-Capital Habeas Attorney - Immigration Specialist

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Deadline: March 22, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for a full-time attorney in our Non-Capital Habeas Unit (NCHU) stationed in Los Angeles, California. The NCHU is committed to the pursuit of justice by aggressively advocating for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of indigent persons unlawfully confined by the states or federal government.

Job Duties: The NCHU Immigration Specialist is responsible for both directly representing habeas petitioners held in immigration detention, and possibly representing those petitioners in ancillary matters in state and immigration court, and advising other attorneys on immigration issues. The Immigration Specialist would additionally assist trial attorneys in developing motion and trial strategy in immigration-related criminal cases (particularly illegal reentry cases), advise attorneys regarding the immigration consequences of criminal charges and convictions, and train attorneys on developments in criminal-immigration law. The Immigration Specialist may additionally carry a limited number of non-habeas matters, including defending individuals charged with illegal reentry and other immigration-related offenses in the district and appellate courts. The Immigration Specialist may also be expected to handle non-immigration-related cases, as required by the needs of 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. Applicants must have experience working at the intersection of criminal and immigration law; at least three years' experience is preferred. Spanish fluency is preferred but not required.

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, immigration and refugee advocacy, and/or public interest law; must have superior oral and written communication skills; possess excellent research skills; strong skills in complex fact and legal analysis and creative issue development; and work well in teams.

Salary/Benefits: This is a full-time, at-will position. This position is approved for one year and a day, with a possible extension based on need, budget, or the discretion of the Federal Public Defender. 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, two representative writing samples (limited to 15 pages), 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 an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.