

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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Vacancy Announcement

Position: Trial Attorney
Location: Riverside, CA
Deadline: February 11, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for a full-time attorney position in its trial unit in Riverside, California. The Riverside Office represents individuals charged with federal crimes occurring in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The trial 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 accused or convicted of crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer.

Job Duties: Trial attorneys primarily represent indigent individuals charged with violating federal criminal statutes by handling all stages of federal criminal trial matters in the district court. Core job duties include appearing on behalf of clients in court hearings and other related proceedings in Riverside and Los Angeles; visiting clients in jail; drafting motions, briefs, and legal memoranda; and collaborating with investigators, paralegals, and support staff. On occasion, trial attorneys are also assigned cases involving appeals after conviction and post-conviction matters that are involved in federal court proceedings.

Requirements: All applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and be members in good standing of the California Bar. Preference will be given to applicants with at least three years of experience in federal criminal law or applicants with federal judicial clerkship experience, but neither is required.

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; and work well in teams.

A background investigation is required as a condition of employment. In line with current 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>.

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 completion of a successful probationary period, eligible employees may elect to telework up to 2 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 15 pages each), and three references through our website at <https://fpdcda.org/careers/current-openings/>. All application materials must be received by **Wednesday, February 11, 2026**; however, interviews will occur on a rolling basis and the open position may be filled before that date. The Federal Public Defender's Office may fill 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.