

**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
321 EAST 2nd STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-4202  
213-894-2854  
213-894-0081 FAX

**CUAUHTEMOC ORTEGA**

*Federal Public Defender*

**AMY M. KARLIN**

*Chief Deputy*

**C. PAMELA GÓMEZ**

*Capital Habeas Chief*

**LISA LABARRE**

*Los Angeles Trial Chief*

**KELLEY MUNOZ**

*Santa Ana Branch Chief*

**YOUNG KIM**

*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:** Trial Attorney

**Location:** Los Angeles, Riverside, or Santa Ana, 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 full-time attorney positions in its Trial Unit, with positions available in its offices located in downtown Los Angeles, Riverside, and Santa Ana, California. The Trial Unit represents individuals charged with federal crimes occurring throughout the Central District of California, including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. The Office is committed to the pursuit of justice by zealously 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 litigating criminal cases in federal court; appearing on behalf of clients in court hearings and other related proceedings; visiting clients in jail; drafting motions, briefs, and legal memoranda; developing persuasive mitigation strategies for negotiations and sentencing; 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. Trial attorneys must be available to work during regular business hours, and when necessary, during evenings and weekends.

**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 and/or federal criminal law or applicants with federal judicial clerkship experience, but neither is required. Experience or a commitment to working with culturally diverse populations and marginalized communities is also desired.

**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.

Varying hours including nights, weekends, and holidays may be required. 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://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.*