

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
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Vacancy Announcement

Position: Trial Unit Investigator

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Deadline: March 22, 2026

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for full-time investigator positions in the trial unit for our Los Angeles office. The trial unit is committed to the pursuit of justice by 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 investigators perform the critically important role of uncovering the facts necessary to win motions and trials. They analyze complex materials, strategize and develop investigation plans independently or with a team, obtain a variety of records, visit clients in jail, identify and interview witnesses, serve subpoenas, prepare written reports and memoranda, track case assignments and case activity, prepare or assist with sentencing mitigation videos, assist during trial and occasionally testify, and effectively use electronic tools both in the course of investigations and during trials. Additionally, investigators develop evidence for sentencing by identifying mental health, environmental, and social mitigating factors.

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. A high level of computer literacy is required. Applicants must be proficient in conducting online and social media investigations. They must also demonstrate an ability to use open sources creatively to 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 preferred, but not required. This position may require extensive 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 required as 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 are self-starters who can work independently. They demonstrate an interest in social justice, civil rights, or indigent defense; have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills; are able to develop a rapport with people of different backgrounds; 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. 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, three writing samples, 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.