

**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
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**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:** Legal Assistant

**Location:** 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 a full-time legal assistant position in our trial unit for our Santa Ana office. The Federal Public Defender's Office is committed to the pursuit of justice by aggressively advocating in federal court for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of individuals who are charged with federal crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer.

**Job Duties:** Legal assistants provide a full range of executive-level secretarial and clerical support services to attorneys on trial cases. General areas of responsibility include reception coverage, filing of court documents electronically and manually; preparing and editing draft pleadings, reports, and correspondence; organizing and compiling exhibits; maintaining attorneys' calendars; accurately maintaining up-to-date case files and facility clearances; composing correspondence; screening public and client telephone calls; and processing mail, as needed. The legal assistant will be assigned to multiple attorneys and will be required to assist with overflow coverage when needed.

**Requirements:** All applicants must have graduated from an accredited school with a bachelor's degree or at least one-year of specialized experience performing progressively responsible duties as a legal assistant. Extensive relevant experience may substitute a bachelor's degree. Candidates must demonstrate a high level of computer literacy, including expertise with Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat programs. Experience with legal practice-related programs such as evidence review platforms, document management systems, and document indexing tools is also highly preferred. The ideal candidate will also have comprehensive knowledge of legal secretarial principles, practices, methods, and techniques; an understanding of district and circuit court rules, protocols, policies, and precedents; and knowledge of legal terminology and Blue Book citation format. The ability to speak, read, and write in Spanish is preferred, but not required. This is an in-office position. Telework is not available.

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>.

**Selection Criteria:** Successful applicants demonstrate an interest in social justice, civil rights, or indigent defense; must have excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills; have strong organizational, analytical, and technical skills; an ability to organize work and set priorities to meet critical deadlines; capable of learning new technological tools, when needed; be able to work independently and take initiative; 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. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

**How to Apply:** Apply by submitting a letter of interest, résumé, 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.*