

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Western District of Washington

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Interim Federal Defender

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
Investigator – Tacoma, Washington

Position No. 26-02

Announced: February 9, 2026

Closes: Open until filled. Priority given to applications received by March 9, 2026.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington (FPD) is accepting applications for a full-time criminal defense investigator with a duty station in the Tacoma office. The FPD represents people charged with federal crimes who cannot afford to hire an attorney or are entitled to one. The Court appoints our attorneys to represent accused persons before charges are filed, upon arrest, for the appeals process, and through federal habeas corpus review. Candidates should demonstrate a strong background in criminal defense investigation and be dedicated to defending those accused of committing crimes even when the evidence against them appears strong. Candidates should be self-motivated, resourceful, and client-centered, and should demonstrate a commitment to social justice, the promotion of equity, and anti-oppressive practices. This position is supervised by the Chief Investigator.

Responsibilities: The investigator will provide criminal defense investigation for our clients charged with criminal offenses and violations or involved in post-conviction proceedings in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington and the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Our office occasionally represents clients charged in other districts.

We seek an investigator with experience working as a member of defense teams, advocating for people accused of committing crimes, and showing the humanity of the people accused even when the evidence against them appears strong. They should have initiative, creativity, compassion, and a desire to stand up for those with few resources—with a demonstrated ability to do so in the face of considerable power and influence. They will perform both fact and mitigation investigation at all stages of litigation; gather and maintain records; review and analyze discovery and case documents, including forensic data; conduct background investigations; locate and interview witnesses; report information gathered from interviews to attorneys and case teams; meet with clients regularly; identify and work with experts and assist with their contracts; document and photograph findings; serve subpoenas; coordinate witnesses for hearings and trial; provide assistance to attorneys and case team members; prepare declarations and affidavits; and testify at trials and hearings if needed. Investigators in the Tacoma office may also be assigned to cases filed in the Seattle courthouse.

The investigator will collaborate with teams of attorneys, paralegals, social workers, and other staff to uphold every person's right to be presumed innocent and to receive a fair sentence if convicted. The FPD provides a vigorous defense at trial and, if our client is convicted, at sentencing and on appeal. We advocate for humane sentences by developing mitigation evidence and presenting judges with fully developed views of our clients and their lives, not merely their charges.

Selection Criteria: The selected candidate will have a demonstrated commitment to quality representation and will have recent, substantial criminal defense investigation experience. Spanish fluency is preferred.

The investigator must be able to manage a challenging caseload, set and meet deadlines, organize case materials, determine priorities, travel within the United States and internationally, and work flexible hours. Desirable skills include having a reputation for integrity; the ability to assess and safely work within potentially dangerous environments; excellent communication, writing, and people skills; and proficiency in various technology such as digital forensics, online databases, and OSINT. Familiarity with Western Washington and knowledge of and experience working with clients from a range of backgrounds is preferred. This position demands considerable discretion, resourcefulness, creativity, initiative, and interpersonal skills.

Requirements: The successful candidate must have a college degree or the equivalent of three years of general experience, a minimum of three years of investigative experience, and working knowledge of investigative principles, practices, methods, and techniques. They must possess a valid driver's license and be able to drive (including long distances).

Applicants must meet the [employment eligibility requirements](#) of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. As a condition of employment, candidates must be fingerprinted and successfully complete a background check. A prior criminal conviction is not necessarily disqualifying.

Salary and Benefits: This position has a starting salary range of \$83,935 to \$141,367 (Grade 11, Step 1 to Grade 14, Step 1). The full performance salary range is \$109,122 to \$183,782 (Grade 11, Step 10 to Grade 14, Step 10). These ranges are based on the Judicial Salary Plan effective January 12, 2026. The salary will be based on professional experience. Benefits include health and life insurance plus 11 paid federal holidays, 13 days of paid sick leave, and 13 days of paid vacation leave annually. (The rate of paid vacation leave increases with years of service.) The position is eligible for the [Federal Employees Retirement System \(FERS\)](#), including the [Thrift Savings Plan \(TSP\)](#), which matches up to 5% of employee contributions. Salary is paid biweekly and only by direct deposit. Partial telework is available for this position.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Our office values diversity, is committed to equity and inclusion, and aspires to create a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, openness, and humility that honors the people we represent. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to the FPD because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences. We believe representation is better when members of the defense team have diverse backgrounds and experiences. We seek colleagues who share this belief and commitment. We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, persistence, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully—no matter the allegation or circumstance.

The FPD seeks applications from a diverse group of qualified individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, nation of origin, culture, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, education, opinions, age, languages spoken, veteran status, disability, religion, and socio-

economic circumstance. We especially encourage applications from people who have been affected by the criminal legal system and people from underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

How to Apply: Qualified persons may apply by emailing a letter of interest, résumé, and two professional references (including names, email addresses, and telephone numbers) as a single PDF document to **wawpersonnel@fd.org**. Please include the position title “Investigator” in the email subject line.

Only applicants granted interviews will be contacted. Initial interviews may be conducted in person or via video conference. No telephone inquiries please.

This position is subject to available funds.