



OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL DEFENDER
Eastern District of California
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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT #26-010
ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDER - FRESNO

The Office of the Federal Defender for the Eastern District of California is accepting applications for a full-time **Assistant Federal Defender** position for the **Fresno Office**. The Office of the Federal Defender represents indigent persons in federal criminal cases and related court matters under the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A.

WHY THIS OFFICE

Our Assistant Federal Defenders provide holistic, professional legal representation to financially eligible individuals charged with, or under investigation for, any federal criminal offense from misdemeanors to felonies. We litigate on behalf of our clients in the United States District Court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court, and on occasion, in the California state courts. Our AFDs carry an extensive, varied caseload through all litigation stages with room to explore novel legal and factual arguments in defending our clients. We practice at the highest levels, enjoying excellent reputations for personal and professional integrity. Our Office boasts a collegial culture, strongly encouraging teamwork and collaborative discussion.

THE PLACE

Fresno sits in the heart of California's Central Valley. It is the state's fifth-largest city and one of its most livable. Known for its affordability, vibrant arts scene, and diverse culture, Fresno offers a welcoming blend of urban living and outdoor adventure. Its proximity to Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks makes it an ideal home base for nature enthusiasts. The city features numerous museums, theaters, live music venues, and a strong commitment to the arts, contributing to its lively cultural atmosphere. With a Mediterranean climate, residents enjoy warm, dry summers and mild winters. Surrounded by rich agricultural land, Fresno is also recognized for its abundant farms, fresh produce, and local farmers markets. Fresno places a high value on education and is home to California State University, Fresno, Fresno City College, and strong public and private school systems including Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts. Additionally, California's central coast, acclaimed wineries, San Francisco, and Los Angeles are all within easy reach, making Fresno a well-connected and appealing place to live.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

We seek a driven attorney committed to client-centered representation with a passion for motions work and a commitment to understanding how our clients got to this moment, working with our staff social worker to set our clients up for future success, however that may be defined. As a Trial Attorney, you will represent clients in all stages of federal criminal proceedings, including trial, and sentencing, and the opportunity to engage in post-conviction litigation where appropriate. Whether you are handling a misdemeanor caseload (from Yosemite National Park, U.S. Forest Service lands, military bases, or the Veterans and Social Security Centers) or a felony caseload, you will explore complex legal and factual issues, develop litigation strategies, research, draft and argue motions, and appear frequently in court telling your clients' stories from the start of the case arguing for their release through to sentencing. Throughout each representation, you will maintain regular communication with clients, experts, family members, and witnesses. Collaboration is key, and you will work closely with colleagues, including investigators and paralegals, in a supportive, team-oriented environment.

REQUIREMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the position of Assistant Federal Defender, all applicants must either be admitted to the State Bar of California or be a member in good standing of another state's bar and plan to be admitted to the California Bar within two years of starting. We encourage you to let us know about your legal experiences, especially in criminal, legal aid, and/or civil rights cases. Prior experience or clerkship welcomed but not required. This position requires travel.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Our ideal candidate has excellent legal writing and oral advocacy skills, an ability to work in a collaborative team environment, and effective organizational skills with the ability to set priorities. Excellent communication with clients, colleagues, staff, government and court personnel is required. Spanish-language proficiency is preferred.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Appointment to this position is contingent upon the successful completion of an FBI background check. Federal Public Defender employees are members of the judicial branch of the government and are considered "at will." This position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. Candidates must be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident in the process of applying for citizenship. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit)

SALARY & BENEFITS

This is a full-time position with pay based on qualifications and years of legal experience since graduation from law school. Salary ranges match those of Assistant US Attorneys with similar experience. A comprehensive benefits package includes health and life insurance, vision and dental benefits, flexible spending accounts, 13 days of paid annual leave (annual leave accrual increases over time), 13 days of paid sick leave, paid leave for all 12 federal holidays, and participation in the Federal Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan (with up to 5% government matching contributions).

Telework up to 2 days per week is available for this position.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

In one PDF document, please submit a letter of interest, résumé, a writing sample, three references, and a completed ***Application for Judicial Branch Employment form (AO78)***, http://www.cae-fpd.org/AO_78.pdf, to:

Heather Williams, Federal Defender
Attn: Human Resources
at the following email: cae_hr@fd.org

Email subject line should read: **2026-10 – Assistant Federal Defender**

This position was announced on July 2, 2026, is open until filled, and is subject to the availability of funding. Preference given to applications received by **August 2, 2026**. Applicants will be notified before any communication with listed references.

Commitment to Fair Hiring: Our office values fair hiring and an equitable workplace. 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, languages spoken, veteran status, disability, experiences, and religion. We encourage applications from members of the BIPOC community, people who have been affected by the criminal legal system, and people from other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify our Personnel Administrator, Lupe Hernandez, at lupe_hernandez@fd.org.