



Capital Habeas Unit Assistant Federal Defender, Federal Defender Program, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia) - 2026

The Atlanta Federal Defender Program is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Capital Habeas Unit Assistant Federal Defender to join our multidisciplinary team serving indigent death-sentenced persons in federal habeas and clemency proceedings.

① Information for Applicants

About Us

The Federal Defender Program, Inc. (FDP) is a private, nonprofit law firm devoted to uplifting our clients and their causes through excellence in federal criminal defense. Guided by compassion and dedication, we provide exceptional, client-centered representation through a multidisciplinary, team-based approach. Our teams—attorneys, investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, social workers, and administrative professionals—work collaboratively to pursue the best possible outcomes for every client.

The Trial Unit represents persons charged with federal criminal offenses in the Northern District of Georgia. The Capital Habeas Unit represents death-sentenced clients in all stages of their federal court litigation. The Northern District of Georgia encompasses the Atlanta, Gainesville, Newnan, and Rome Divisions, each with its own courthouse. By far, the majority of Northern District of Georgia prosecutions take place in the Atlanta Division, where our office is also located.

The most common cases we handle involve drug offenses, firearms offenses, fraud and financial crimes, and immigration offenses, though our work spans the full range of federal criminal litigation—from investigation through trial, sentencing, appeal, and post-conviction proceedings. Our representation also includes some capital defense work in the Trial Unit and post-conviction capital work in the Capital Habeas Unit.

FDP is a nonprofit Georgia corporation fully funded by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. We are not a government agency, and our employees are not government employees.



Our Commitment to an Inclusive Workplace

We believe that valuing and respecting all people—and honoring each other’s lived experiences—strengthens our ability to represent clients from every background. We know that excellent legal representation is supported by a diverse, collaborative, and inclusive workforce. FDP is committed to fostering a culture of acceptance and belonging that encourages creativity, productivity, and mutual respect. We value hard work, diversity, teamwork, creativity, flexibility, and fairness.

About the Role

Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) Assistant Federal Defenders represent death-sentenced clients in their federal habeas corpus proceedings, state clemency proceedings, and in proceedings related to execution dates.

CHU attorneys carry a full caseload, representing clients in all stages of their federal court litigation—investigation, briefing at all levels of the court system, oral advocacy, and in clemency proceedings.

Regular responsibilities include

- Working with clients;
- Digesting large case files and investigative materials;
- Developing litigation strategies;
- Drafting pleadings;
- Conducting evidentiary hearings;
- Presenting oral arguments;
- Working with experts and other witnesses; and
- Collaborating with teams of investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, and legal assistants.

This position will sometimes require work outside of normal business hours. Some travel may also be required.

Assistant Federal Defenders may not engage in the private practice of law.

Work Environment

- This is an in-person position. After a probationary period of employment, team members may be permitted to work remotely one day per week with supervisory approval.
- The position will require travel to courts, detention facilities, and other case-related locations during work hours, as well as occasional overnight travel.
- This position occasionally requires lifting or moving materials weighing up to 25 pounds.

Qualifications

We are looking for lawyers who bring both skill and heart to this work.

- Juris Doctor degree from an accredited law school and membership in good standing with the State Bar of Georgia.
- At least two years of legal experience or a judicial clerkship, with strong research and writing abilities.
- A demonstrated commitment to the representation of indigent persons and to client-centered advocacy.
- The ability to communicate thoughtfully and effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, staff, court personnel, and agency representatives as part of a collaborative defense team.
- Since the position requires travel to courts, detention facilities, and other case-related locations, applicants must have a valid driver’s license, reliable personal transportation, and current automobile insurance. Mileage is reimbursed at the federal mileage reimbursement rate.
- Applicants must be authorized to work in the United States at the time of hire. FDP participates in the employment eligibility verification process required by federal law.

Salary and Benefits

Salary is commensurate with experience and education and matches that of Assistant United States Attorneys with comparable experience.

Benefits: Paid vacation, paid sick time, paid holidays, health insurance, life insurance, and participation in our 401(k) plan.

How to Apply

Interested applicants must answer the questions on the next two pages of this form and upload the required submissions as a single PDF file.

- **Apply Early:** Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.
- **Follow Instructions:** Applicants must follow all application instructions. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- **You will be contacted only if selected for an interview.**
- **Rolling Interviews:** Rolling interviews will be conducted, and this position will remain open until filled.
- **Background Check:** This is a position of trust. Employment may be contingent upon the successful completion of a background check and I9 verification.
- **Confidentiality:** All applications will be treated confidentially.

Preference will be given to candidates who apply by February 28, 2026.

Important Notices

- **Equal Opportunity Employer:** FDP is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We hire without regard to race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, height, weight, veteran status, military obligations, marital or parental status, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Non-Tolerance for Discrimination and Harassment:** FDP does not tolerate discrimination or harassment in any personnel decisions or workplace interactions.
- **Nonprofit Employees:** Employees of the Federal Defender Program are not federal employees. The Federal Defender Program, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation funded by the Judiciary.
- **Drug-Free Workplace:** FDP is a drug-free workplace.
- **Funding Contingency:** This position is contingent upon the availability of federal funding.

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