



Capital Habeas Unit Mitigation Specialist/Investigator, Federal Defender Program, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia) - 2026

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

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

The CHU Mitigation Specialist / Investigator plays an integral role in the investigation and presentation of both guilt/innocence and penalty-phase issues at all stages of habeas corpus proceedings, as well as stay litigation and executive clemency.

Core duties include:

- Building relationships with clients and their families;
- Assisting attorneys in investigating and developing clients' life history evidence;
- Reviewing, analyzing, and organizing voluminous case files and records;
- Identifying and initiating new areas of investigation;
- Gathering and assessing documentary and other evidence;
- Locating and interviewing witnesses;
- Drafting memoranda, declarations, chronologies, and social history reports;
- Working with experts;
- Serving subpoenas; and
- Assisting with hearings.

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 Mitigation Specialist / Investigator will work collaboratively with paralegals and under the supervision of one or more attorneys.
- The position requires extensive overnight travel and work outside of business hours, including weekends and holidays.
- This position occasionally requires lifting or moving materials weighing up to 25 pounds.

Qualifications

We are seeking a mitigation specialist who brings skill, curiosity, compassion, and professionalism to this deeply human work.

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- Experience relevant to the investigation and development of mitigating evidence, preferably in capital trial or post-conviction cases.
- A desire and capacity to work collaboratively in a multidisciplinary team environment.
- A strong commitment to providing holistic representational support and to working with and on behalf of people from diverse backgrounds.
- The ability to build relationships and develop rapport with clients and their families, and to gather and analyze anecdotal and documentary evidence related to a client's life history.
- The ability to work independently and proactively, including recognizing and assessing mental health symptomatology and determining the most effective mitigation investigation approach for each case.
- Strong organizational skills to gather, maintain, and manage documents and information for assigned cases, and the ability to interpret, analyze, and integrate records and legal documents.
- The ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with counsel and experts, and to assist in identifying and selecting appropriate experts.
- Attention to accuracy and detail.
- Computer proficiency in Microsoft Office programs, including Word and Excel, and in Adobe Acrobat.
- The ability to maintain confidences, protect legal privileges, and demonstrate personal and professional integrity.
- The ability to work under time pressure and appropriately prioritize responsibilities.
- This position requires travel to courts, detention facilities, and other case-related locations, as well as occasional overnight travel. 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.

Salary and Benefits

The starting annual salary for this position falls within a range under the Judicial Salary Plan (JSP) from Grade 11 at \$76,671 to Grade 14 at \$167,876. The salary of the successful applicant will be commensurate with the person's qualifications and years of 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.
- **Work Authorization Check:** FDP participates in federal I-9 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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