



Trial Unit Investigator, Federal Defender Program, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia) — 2026

The Atlanta Federal Defender Program is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Trial Unit Investigator to join our multidisciplinary team serving indigent persons charged with federal criminal offenses in the Northern District of 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.

Our clients are indigent persons charged with federal criminal offenses in the Northern District of Georgia. FDP represents approximately 85% of these individuals, with the remaining clients served by members of the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) Panel. 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

Trial Unit Investigators assist attorneys across the Northern District of Georgia in representing individuals charged in federal court with offenses ranging from misdemeanors to capital felonies. Our cases are investigation-intensive and require substantial fieldwork, including witness interviews and crime scene investigation across a wide geographic area.

Investigators are integral members of the case and trial team. They work closely with attorneys, paralegals, social workers, and mitigation specialists to develop case strategy, maintain client and family relationships, and prepare for hearings and trial. The ideal applicant has excellent interpersonal and communication skills and is comfortable interacting with people from all backgrounds, including individuals experiencing substance abuse and mental health challenges.

An effective investigator responds thoughtfully to assignments while also proactively identifying additional leads, issues, or avenues of inquiry that may assist in the defense.

Duties and Responsibilities

Investigators perform a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- Locating witnesses; conducting open-ended interviews to develop facts, leads, and information; and serving subpoenas;
- Identifying, locating, and working with experts;
- Reviewing and organizing discovery; assisting attorneys in developing investigative plans and leads; and preparing detailed, comprehensive reports of investigative activity;
- Gathering, organizing, and summarizing records;
- Locating, viewing, and retrieving tangible evidence;
- Photographing crime scenes and evidence;
- Maintaining organized investigative materials;
- Utilizing computer applications and investigative tools, including cell phone forensics, records databases (DMV, ACIS, Accurint), social media platforms, Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Access, and Microsoft Excel;
- Assisting attorneys at hearings and trials by evaluating testimony, coordinating witnesses, and, when necessary, testifying regarding investigative actions or witness interviews.

Work Environment

This is an in-person position. After six months of employment, team members may be permitted to work remotely one day per week with supervisory approval.

The position will require travel during work hours, as well as occasional overnight travel.

This position occasionally requires lifting or moving materials weighing up to 25 pounds.

Qualifications

Minimum qualifications for this position are:

- A bachelor's degree, preferably in Criminal Justice, Social Work, or a related discipline;
- Commitment to indigent defense and personal integrity;
- Three years of investigative or similar experience;
- A valid driver's license, vehicle, and insurance, as the position requires driving within the Northern District of Georgia;
- Spanish fluency is a plus; bilingual candidates are encouraged to apply.

We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, and commitment to ensuring that all people are treated fairly and respectfully, regardless of the allegation or circumstance.

The ideal candidate is a self-starter who is dependable, organized, detail-oriented, and able to work both independently and as part of a multidisciplinary team. The position requires strong time-management skills and the ability to work effectively under the pressure of deadlines.

Salary and Benefits

Salary: The starting annual salary for this position falls within a range under the Judicial Salary Plan (JSP) from Grade JSP-11 at \$78,972 to Grade JSP-14 at \$172,915. (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.
- **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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