

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JODI LINKER
Federal Public Defender

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
INVESTIGATOR: OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
(Posted January 2026)

The Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of California is accepting applications for a full-time investigator based in our Oakland office to join our legal teams providing representation of indigent clients in federal criminal proceedings. This role is instrumental in ensuring the zealous and effective advocacy for our defense efforts, contributing to our mission of upholding the constitutional right to counsel and the inherent dignity of individuals who are accused or convicted of crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Key Responsibilities

Case Review & Analysis: Thoroughly review and analyze discovery materials and other case-related documents, using appropriate technology and tools such as Acrobat, Excel, Cellebrite, and Casemap. Collaborate with other members of the defense team to define the scope, timing, and direction of investigations and initiate new investigative avenues as needed. Communicate such information using excellent oral and written skills.

Witness Engagement: Identify, locate, and interview witnesses crucial to the defense. Handle related tasks such as serving subpoenas, coordinating witness testimonies, and assisting counsel with scheduling for trials and hearings.

Evidence Management: Locate, view, and retrieve pertinent evidence, personal property, and other relevant materials. Document evidence through photography, videography, mapping, and digital capture tools. Work closely with counsel and paralegals to prepare evidence for trial and motion submissions. Engage in social media and deep web investigation using both forensic tools and advanced e-investigation techniques. Maintain an understanding of social media applications, trends, subpoena/warrant requirements, and collection practices, and follow professional responsibility requirements for investigations.

Digital Literacy: Maintain proficiency with litigation support and digital forensic review tools such as Casemap, dtSearch, Cellebrite Reader, and Magnet AXIOM. Keep current and proficient on new developments in investigative technology and professional responsibility requirements for same. Recommend additions and modifications to current tools as necessary.

Records & Documentation: Collect, organize, analyze, and produce necessary records. Maintain accurate logs, filings, and reference materials and verify information for accuracy and authenticity.

Courtroom Testimony: Be willing, capable, and prepared to testify in court.

Client Interaction: Engage frequently and directly with clients, their families, and their communities, ensuring their concerns and insights are integrated into the investigative process.

QUALIFICATIONS

A minimum of five years of work experience is required, two of which must be in criminal investigation or information gathering. An applicant must be a high school graduate or equivalent. A variety of prior experience, including in non-legal fields and/or social work, paralegal, or legal assistant training, would be helpful, as would experience developing and analyzing mitigation evidence for court proceedings. This position requires considerable initiative, resourcefulness, creativity, and drive. Excellent writing skills, computer proficiency, ability to communicate and work well with others; demonstrated interest in criminal justice and commitment to obtaining justice for indigent persons; and ability to perform each of the tasks associated with this position are required. The successful applicant will have the ability to analyze and evaluate facts, evidence, and related information, as well as possess tact, integrity, and discretion. A valid California driver's license, car, and appropriate motor vehicle insurance are required. Spanish or other foreign language skills are desired, but not required. Investigator's license is not required.

In addition, the investigator must have:

- Expertise in investigative techniques and comprehensive knowledge of investigative principles, methods, and practices, including the ability to recognize issues and identify practical solutions.
- Strong interpersonal and communication abilities, with the capacity to build rapport with clients and witnesses.
- Basic understanding of criminal law, procedure, evidence, and confidentiality issues, such as the attorney-client privilege.
- Advanced proficiency and skills in technology, including Microsoft Office, Excel, Adobe Acrobat, and online research and litigation support tools.
- Experience in conducting open-source and social media investigations, ability to use open sources creatively to develop both fact and mitigation evidence, and data analytics, as well as skill and interest in adapting to and maintaining proficiency in dynamic cyber environments.
- Experience in digital/cyber forensics, financial forensics, or video/audio editing is a plus.

Location, Travel & Flexibility: This position will have a designated duty station in Oakland but may be assigned cases in or required to move duty stations to the San Jose and/or San Francisco offices on a temporary basis at the discretion of the Defender. The position is subject to the office's telework policy, which (subject to change) generally provides for up to one day of remote work per week. This position requires travel throughout our district and occasional out-of-district (including international) travel for investigation, training, and litigation. Travel will be reimbursed. Varying work hours, including nights, weekends, and holidays, may be required.

Physical Demands and Work Environment: The physical demands for this position are those necessary to successfully perform the essential functions of the job as outlined above. The investigator may occasionally need to lift and/or move up to 25 pounds and may spend extended periods driving or traveling by car or airplane.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Compensation is determined by the Judicial Salary Plan, and will be commensurate with the candidate's experience, within a range from JSP- 11, Step 1, to JSP-14, Step 1, currently yielding a starting salary of \$93,358 up to \$157,236 per annum. This position requires mandatory direct deposit for salary payments. A comprehensive benefits package is provided. For more details on benefits available to federal judiciary employees, please visit:

<http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

This position may be subject to FBI fingerprint and background checks. Employment will be provisional and contingent upon satisfactory completion of the required investigation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please fill out the application form here: <https://ndcald.knack.com/applications#staff-positionoak/> and submit the following material in a single .pdf file:

- A plain face sheet, containing only your last name, first name, and the name of your current employer and/or your current employment status;
- A cover letter explaining your interest in the position;
- Your resume;
- Three professional references, including name, email address, and telephone number (*references will not be contacted until applicant is advised*); and,
- A relevant writing sample that demonstrates your own original work.

The uploaded .pdf file should be named, "Last Name_First Name.pdf" (e.g., *Doe_Jane.pdf*).

Applicants will be contacted only if selected for an interview. The position deadline is February 6, 2026, with preferential review to applications received by January 23, 2026.

Non-Citizen Applicants: Under federal law, non-citizens may be interviewed and considered for employment in the Office of the Federal Public Defender. Employment offers, however, can only be made to individuals who qualify under one of the exceptions in 8 U.S.C. § 1324b(a)(3)(B). In most cases, this means that an offer of employment cannot be made unless the candidate is a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident who is seeking U.S. citizenship as described [here](#).

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment. We believe in supporting people to do their best work and thrive as we build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive practice. We provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, sexual orientation, protected veteran status, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by law.