



**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA**
129 West Trade Street, Suite 300
Charlotte, NC 28202
(704) 374-0720
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John G. Baker
Federal Public Defender

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First Assistant

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Trial Unit Chief

**Position Announcement
Assistant Federal Public Defender – Asheville**

The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Western District of North Carolina is looking for an Assistant Federal Public Defender for our Trial Unit in Asheville, North Carolina. *Prior federal criminal defense experience is preferred but not required.* We are committed to excellence and the quest for justice of the indigent accused, focusing on our clients' needs with innovation, passion, and through dynamic advocacy.

Posted: September 8, 2026.

Closing date: Applications received by September 30, 2026, will receive priority consideration. The position will remain open until filled.

This position is located in Asheville, a thriving mountain city with an eclectic downtown, hundreds of studios and art galleries, a world-class culinary culture, a thriving live music scene, and the awe-inspiring scenery and outdoor activities of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Asheville is served by a regional airport and is conveniently located a few hours by car from international flight hubs in Charlotte and Atlanta.



Job Description: The scope of our work includes all stages of federal criminal proceedings. The Assistant Federal Public Defender will represent clients charged with federal criminal offenses and clients involved in other matters covered under the Criminal Justice Act. The Asheville Trial Unit represents clients in the 11 westernmost counties of North Carolina and the Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The attorney will have a full caseload as a member of an interdisciplinary trial team. Core duties include building relationships with clients; analyzing large case files to identify legal claims; directing and participating in investigation; working with experts; developing litigation strategies; motions practice and pleadings; conducting evidentiary hearings; jury trial; and robust sentencing advocacy and mitigation development. The position will require travel, which may include the assignment of cases out of our Charlotte office, and some work outside of business hours, including weekends and holidays.

Requirements: Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited law school, a member in good standing of the highest court in the state where licensed, and committed to the representation of the indigent accused. Attorneys applying for this position should have sufficient experience to independently undertake the defense of serious criminal cases before the U.S. District Court. Prior criminal defense experience, preferably federal, is required. Our ideal candidate will have sufficient experience to handle felony trials upon hiring.

The physical demands of this position are those required to successfully perform the duties described above. Reasonable accommodations will be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform these essential functions.

Salary and Benefits: Starting salary will be commensurate with the experience and qualifications of the applicant. The current starting salary range for this position is \$76,748 to \$180,078 per annum. This is an excepted position with federal employment benefits that include paid vacation, paid sick time, paid holidays, health insurance, life insurance, retirement plan and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (401k). Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit). Telework and flex scheduling, consistent with court obligations and position duties, are available to all employees after successful completion of probationary period.

Conditions of Employment: The employee will be located in the Asheville office full-time, less a reasonable telework schedule. All application information is subject to verification. Applicants must be United States citizens, or persons authorized to work in the United States. Appointment to the position is provisional pending the successful completion of a background check. *A prior criminal conviction is not necessarily disqualifying.* Employees are members of the judicial branch and considered “at will” employees. Travel by a personal vehicle may be required.



About Us: Our vision is client-centered: Advocacy requires engaging with every aspect of our clients’ lives. We will defend our clients with purpose, compassion, and courage; identifying inequities that deny them of freedoms, drive their prosecutions, and inflate their sentences. We will work to reform the criminal legal system that is too often blind to these realities. We will partner with those who serve our community to help secure a future for our clients and their families. And we will strive to provide aid to and set an example for the present and future generations of our professions.

We recognize that we cannot serve the distinct needs of our clients without assembling a diverse team of dedicated professionals who work and advocate collaboratively on their behalf. We welcome applicants of any race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, age, and status. We are committed to ensuring an inclusive and equitable workplace. Click [here](#) for more information about our office. We have attached our Mission, Vision, and Values statements to this announcement to provide additional insight into the work that you will be asked to perform as an employee of this office.

How to Apply. Qualified persons should email a *single PDF* containing a letter of interest, résumé, and a writing sample of no more than ten pages to WDNCApplication@fd.org, with “Assistant Federal Public Defender – Asheville Trial Unit” in the subject line.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. No phone calls, please.

We welcome requests for accommodations from applicants with disabilities. Please submit any such requests to WDNCApplication@fd.org.

Interviews will be conducted in person or virtually.

This position is subject to the availability of funds.

The Federal Public Defender is an Equal Opportunity Employer



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Mission Statement

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Vision Statement

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Values Statement

We are a diverse office motivated by our devotion to represent the indigent accused with respect and dignity, serving them with dynamic advocacy, excellence, and compassion. We are client-centered and driven by our passion and dedication to our clients. We are unwavering and purposeful in the representation of each client.

- **Dynamic Advocacy:** We are passionate about advocating for our clients. We listen to their stories, address their concerns, and advise them with compassion and expertise. We are innovative, intentional, and creative in our legal strategies. We are tenacious in our efforts to ensure that our clients' needs are always addressed, regardless of income or abilities.
- **Client-Centered Representation:** Clients' voices are at the core of every decision we make. We will represent and connect with our clients with integrity, dignity, and respect and be their voice. We embrace diversity and ensure that those we serve are the experts in their own life stories.
- **Excellence:** We seek the best practices and embody the highest standards of professionalism in all aspects of our representation. We are unafraid of innovation and embrace collaboration within and outside our discipline. We work with our colleagues and peers to hone our skills, challenge our practices, and raise the bar for our professions. We are tireless advocates for the indigent, dedicated and committed, accepting nothing less than excellence.
- **Diversity:** Diversity is essential to advocacy. We cannot represent our community unless we reflect its cultural differences. It makes us better advocates and is at the core of who we are. Diversity is fundamental to building strong relationships with our clients and colleagues. Our office encompasses and embraces people of different races, ethnicities, gender, ages, religious beliefs, sexual identities, etc. We are dedicated to having staff from all walks of life and will continue to recruit diverse talent.