

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota

Jason J. Tupman
Federal Public Defender

Telephone: (605) 330-4489
Fax: (605) 330-4499

Notice of Available Position
RESEARCH & WRITING SPECIALIST

The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota seeks an attorney to join our office in Bismarck, North Dakota or Fargo, North Dakota as a Research & Writing Specialist. Our office provides high-quality representation to people charged with federal crimes who cannot afford to hire an attorney. We operate under the authority of the Criminal Justice Act.

Position Description: Research & Writing Specialists provide advanced legal research, writing, and analytical support to Assistant Federal Public Defenders. Responsibilities include reviewing and analyzing discovery and records; drafting motions, memoranda, and briefs; assisting with complex legal issues at all stages of litigation; and consulting with attorneys regarding trial, sentencing, and appellate matters. The position does not involve signing pleadings or appearing in court. Frequent travel between the two locations is required. Regardless of which duty station the successful applicant is hosted in the work they will be performing will be derived from all branch locations throughout both districts. Attorneys in our office may not engage in the private practice of law.

Required Qualifications:

1. Graduation from an accredited law school;
2. Admission in good standing before the highest court of a state or the District of Columbia;
3. Ability to practice in the United States District Court for the District of North Dakota by the time of entrance on duty; and
4. United States citizenship or authorization to work in the United States.

We welcome applications from attorneys at all stages of their careers, including those newer to federal practice. Above all, we seek applicants with a demonstrated commitment to indigent defense, strong legal research and writing skills, sound judgment, and the ability to work collaboratively in a team-oriented environment. Federal court experience, clerkship experience, or prior criminal-defense work are helpful but not required.

Salary and Benefits: Salary range is commensurate with experience and qualifications within the Judicial Salary Plan at JSP-11 to JSP-14, currently \$74,678 -163,514. This is a full-time position with federal benefits, including health and life insurance, retirement, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is paid bi-weekly by direct deposit. Final hiring is subject to funding availability and a favorable background investigation.

Why Our Office: The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota is a collegial, mission-driven office committed to excellence in indigent defense. Our practice involves serious and complex federal cases that demand precision, professionalism, and close collaboration among attorneys, investigators, paralegals, and support staff.

About Bismarck: Bismarck is North Dakota's capital city and the civic hub of central North Dakota. Situated along the Missouri River, the community offers affordable housing, strong schools, short commutes, and extensive outdoor recreation, including river activities, trail systems, and nearby public lands. With a growing arts and food scene and a friendly, welcoming culture, Bismarck provides a high quality of life for professionals and families alike.

About Fargo: Fargo is a dynamic and fast-growing community known for its strong educational institutions, lively downtown, and welcoming Midwestern character. The city offers excellent schools, diverse cultural and recreational opportunities, and a thriving arts, music, and food scene. With affordable living, year-round outdoor activities, and a vibrant civic culture, Fargo is an appealing place for professionals seeking a supportive community and balanced lifestyle.

How to Apply: Apply by emailing a single PDF containing a letter of interest, résumé, three references, and a recent writing sample to SDX_Jobs@fd.org. Please include: "Research & Writing Specialist Announcement 26-06" in the subject line. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

More than one position may be filled from this advertisement.

The Federal Public Defender for the Districts of South Dakota and North Dakota is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.