

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE

Districts of
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
Rhode Island

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
Research and Writing Specialist (Trial Unit)
MA/NH/RI
April 2026

Position: Research and Writing Specialist
Location: MA, NH or RI
Deadline: Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Priority consideration will be given to applications received by May 4, 2026

THE POSITION

The Federal Public Defender Office is hiring full-time Research and Writing Specialist(s) for its offices in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The Research and Writing Specialist provides advanced legal research and writing services to the Federal Defender and Assistant Federal Public Defenders (AFPDs). This position can be based in Boston, MA, Springfield, MA, Concord, NH or Providence, RI; however, the selected candidate(s) will work on cases in all three districts. We may hire more than one candidate from this announcement. All positions are subject to funding availability.

ABOUT OUR OFFICE

Our office is dedicated to the zealous representation of individuals accused of federal crimes who cannot afford to hire private counsel. We represent clients from arrest through trial and sentencing (if convicted), as well as on appeal—including before the U.S. Supreme Court—and in collateral federal habeas corpus proceedings. Our work is constitutionally mandated, client-centered, and mission-driven. We embrace the unique contributions that varied backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences bring to our office and our representation.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Research and Writing Specialists work in collaboration with Assistant Federal Public Defenders (AFPDs), investigators, paralegals, IT professionals, and administrators. They work on criminal cases in various stages of litigation. They review discovery records, prepare pleadings, briefs, and motions; organize records and assist in the development of litigation strategies; they may prepare memos for clients and AFPDs; remain apprised of the law, and the changes to it, in many fields, but particularly the Fourth Amendment, Federal Rules of Evidence, and Federal Sentencing Guidelines; may meet with clients and may

under certain circumstances make argument before the court, conduct or assist in appellate litigation, and mentor or supervise interns; and perform other duties as determined by the Federal Defender or the management team.

This position may require travel within our districts and occasional travel outside of our districts. Research and Writing attorneys primarily participate in the representation of clients in the federal trial court but may also assist in cases before the court of appeals and on federal habeas review. The position also presents opportunities to serve on committees and participate in local, regional, and national training seminars.

REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

- Be client centered.
- Have a JD from an accredited law school and be admitted to practice before the highest court of any state or the District of Columbia.
- Have at least 3 years of post-law school experience.
- Possess above-average proficiency in criminal procedure.
- Be a U.S. citizen or have authorization to work in the United States.
- Possess superior legal research, writing, and analytical skills
- Succinctly analyze complex legal problems with clarity and ease.
- Write and speak clearly.
- Be experienced in using Microsoft Word, online legal research platforms such as Westlaw and LexisNexis, and capable of using or learning systems and technologies to improve client outcomes, including Microsoft Teams, Adobe Acrobat, Excel, and other tools to review, process, and organize large amounts of information and data.
- Be eager to learn new systems and technologies to improve client outcomes.
- Be highly organized, attentive to details, and consistently meet deadlines.
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently and collaboratively.
- Be patient, dignified, respectful, and courteous in the workplace.

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE

Experience in criminal defense in state or federal court, as a judicial law clerk is a plus. Appellate experience is also considered a plus. Fluency in another language in addition to English is considered an asset.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary for a Research and Writing Attorney ranges from \$69,905 to \$197,200 per annum. Salary depends upon experience and qualifications and only the most qualified candidates begin at the highest salary. Among the many benefits of employment are the Federal Employees Retirement System, the Thrift Savings Plan (401(k)), paid annual and sick leave, 11 paid federal holidays, and health, life, disability, long-term care, dental, and

vision insurance. Salary is payable only by direct deposit.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must send an e-mail to HRBoston@fd.org that is titled “Research and Writing Specialist” and contains a single Adobe.pdf document with:

- A Cover Letter explaining your interest and qualifications
- A Resume with three professional references
- A Writing Sample
- Form AO-78 (found at <https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/ao078.pdf>)

*No phone calls please. Applicants who apply without submitting all required documents will not be considered. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. **Priority consideration will be given to applications received by Monday, May 4, 2026.** Only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

Candidates requiring an accommodation should contact Tina_Collins-Kent@fd.org.

The selected candidate will be subject to a background check and investigation, including fingerprinting, and a subsequent favorable suitability determination for employment.

**The Federal Defender Office for the Districts of MA, NH, and RI
is an equal opportunity employer.**