

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Senior Learning Designer



Organization

[Federal Defender Leadership Center](#)

Location

Fully Virtual / Remote

Type

Full-Time · Mission-Driven

Application deadline

Open until filled, first review: April 20, 2026

Salary range

\$125,776 - \$163,514 (could be higher depending on locality)*

The Federal Defender Leadership Center was established in 2023 with a clear and urgent charge: every client deserves the very best representation the federal defender community has to offer. Meeting that standard requires leaders who are as committed, skilled, and mission-driven in their leadership as they are in their defense of human and constitutional rights. That is an extraordinary responsibility — and those who carry it deserve the training, support, and resources to do it well.

We are a small, high-performing team operating in a start-up environment with real purpose at its core. We move fast, think creatively, challenge each other, and care deeply about the work. The people who join us now will not inherit someone else's architecture — they will build it. Each of the focus areas described in this document represents a genuine opportunity to lead where the field needs more, and to do work whose impact on the federal defender community will be traceable, lasting, and real.

ABOUT THE FEDERAL DEFENDER LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Leadership Center is dedicated to cultivating a culture of inspired leadership within the federal defender community — developing the next generation of leaders, strengthening current ones, and building the systems and programs that make leadership development sustainable over time.

We are embedded within the federal public defender system and operate as a fully virtual organization. Our team is small by design — every role carries real ownership, real visibility, and real impact. We are in an active building phase, which means this is an opportunity to shape something from the ground up, not inherit someone else's playbook.

We are a proud equal opportunity employer whose central mission is to keep people out of prison through holistic representation, collaboration, and education. Federal public defender clients are people accused of federal crimes who cannot afford private lawyers, whose humanity is honored and protected at every stage of the criminal case and beyond.

Diversity and dignity are central to our work, and we hire without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, height, weight, veteran status, military obligations, or marital or parental status. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment in any personnel decisions or employee interactions.

THE OPPORTUNITY

As a Senior Learning Designer, you will support the full range of Leadership Center programming — from virtual and in-person workshops and leadership trainings to cohort-based learning, coaching engagements, and everything in between. You will bring design expertise, facilitation skill, and operational range to a team building a national leadership development function in real time. This is a high-scope, high-ownership role for someone who thrives when the work is dynamic, meaningful, and never the same day twice.

We are looking for a candidate who cares about impact, not just activity, with focused experience and interest in several distinct areas described below. We encourage you to indicate which one speaks most directly to your background and passion – and consider whether both fit. We are interested in discussing how your skills and experiences might span multiple areas.

- **On-Demand & Digital Learning Experiences:** New supervisors rarely arrive on a schedule that matches the training calendar. They are promoted mid-year, inherit teams mid-crisis, and face real leadership demands — difficult conversations, performance issues, team dynamics, resource decisions — before relevant in person or virtual training with a cohort is available. On-demand asynchronous learning meets new supervisors where they are — in the moment of need. We are looking for an experienced professional to develop engaging, high-quality learning experiences specifically designed for asynchronous and on-demand formats — working in close collaboration with colleagues who bring digital communications and production expertise. With a digital communications colleague, you will co-create the instructional design and learning architecture of the Leadership Center's on-demand library, ensuring that every piece of content is purposefully designed, not just recorded. Experience developing virtual and on-demand educational programs is required.
- **Leadership Development Programming:** Most leadership development professionals are strong in one or two dimensions – they can design, or they can facilitate, or they can run a program. This role calls for all three to support the full range of Leadership Center programming — from virtual and in-person workshops and leadership trainings to cohort-based learning, coaching engagements, and everything in between. You will bring design expertise, facilitation skill, and operational range to a team building a national leadership development function in real time. If you do your best work when no two days look alike and the mission runs deep, this role was built for you.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

Program Design & Architecture

- Design and develop leadership development programs across modalities — virtual workshops, in-person intensives, cohort-based learning, and blended experiences
- Build curriculum that is evidence-based, experientially grounded, and calibrated to the specific culture and challenges of the federal defender community
- Develop facilitator guides, participant materials, pre-work, and application tools that extend learning beyond the training event
- Contribute to the Leadership Center's overall content strategy and programming roadmap

Implementation & Management

- Lead the national rollout of community or subject-specific programming, coordinating across geographies and office contexts

- Manage ongoing program operations — matching cycles, participant check-ins, cohort management, and facilitator support
- Identify and resolve program issues proactively, before they become participant experience problems
- Facilitate workshops, leadership trainings, cohort sessions, and learning experiences — virtually and in person — with credibility and craft
- Adapt facilitation approach in real time to the energy, experience level, and needs of the group
- Create psychologically safe learning environments where participants are willing to be challenged, take risks, and try new behaviors

Collaboration & Production Partnership

- Work alongside colleagues with digital communications and production expertise — collaborating on both the design and execution to produce something genuinely useful, polished, and built for the people who will use it.
- Serve as the instructional authority in content development cycles — owning the learning objectives and assessment strategy while collaborating with partners on design logic and the digital experience.
- Contribute to the development of content standards and quality guidelines for the Leadership Center's programs

Community Building & Support

- Build and maintain professional community with program participants, sponsors, and stakeholders across the federal defender community – creating connection, shared learning, and mutual support
- Design and facilitate convenings, peer learning forums, and community touchpoints that strengthen both skill and shared learning and support

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

- Define program success metrics and build evaluation processes that measure real developmental impact, not just participation
- Collect, analyze, and act on participant feedback systematically
- Produce clear reports and insights for Leadership Center leadership and key stakeholders
- Continuously iterate — treating the program as a living design, not a finished product

WHAT YOU BRING

The essentials:

- Significant experience across the learning lifecycle — design, facilitation, and program operations — at least 7 years of progressive responsibility
- Experience in a supervisory or leadership role
- Excellent writing skills — you communicate with precision, clarity, and purpose on the page
- Able to manage a complex program calendar and present confidently to senior stakeholders — equally at ease in a spreadsheet and in front of a room.
- Able to thoughtfully balance different, sometimes competing, interests and viewpoints — diplomacy and directness in equal measure

- Able to work collaboratively with colleagues and outside organizations, often remotely across the country and time zones
- Able to work independently and with discipline from a fully remote work site
- J.D. or bachelor's or graduate degree in education, social work, organizational behavior, management, leadership, instructional design, or a related field

What will set you apart:

- Experience delivering training to federal defender and/or public interest legal professionals
- Experience in legal practice — the closer to this work, the stronger the candidacy
- Experience in curriculum design and development
- Experience developing virtual and on-demand education programs
- Familiarity with principles and practices of organizational development
- Experience as a mentor or in designing mentorship frameworks
- Experience providing crisis support, trauma-informed facilitation, or professional wellness resources to legal professionals
- Training or certification in coaching (mindset, executive, life, or professional), mediation, or conflict resolution — or demonstrated equivalent experience in high-stakes professional contexts
- Fluency in modern authoring tools, video platforms, and learning management systems for on-demand delivery
- Experience working in a production or multimedia collaboration environment — you know how to co-create with creative partners, from the initial brief through feedback on a cut.
- Commitment to racial justice within the criminal legal system and to zealous advocacy on behalf of individuals facing federal charges and those in need of CJA representation

WHY JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CENTER

◆ Be part of building something from the ground up	◆ Fully virtual — work from anywhere in the U.S.
◆ Small team, high ownership, real visibility	◆ Collaborative culture where every voice matters
◆ Mission that connects to justice and public service	◆ Supportive, innovative, and fast-moving environment
◆ Creativity and diversity of thought are expected	◆ Federal employment benefits

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE | SALARY AND BENEFITS

The Operations Director will serve as an employee of a Federal Public Defender Office and will be supervised by the Leadership Center staff. This structure provides the stability and benefits of federal employment alongside the dynamic, start-up culture of the Leadership Center itself — an unusual and genuinely attractive combination.

*Salary and Benefits

Leadership Center staff are federal employees whose salaries are based on years of experience and include a locality adjustment. The salary range listed in this announcement is based on the Judiciary Salary Plan locality of "Rest of United States (RUS)" which applies to certain parts but not all of the country. To find the salary range including the locality adjustment for the geographic region where you live, which could be higher, please refer to the [Judiciary Salary Plan](#). The salary range for this position based on the "Rest of the United States" locality adjustment is \$125,776 - \$163,514, a range at AD Level 27-29 (for Assistant Federal Defenders)/Grade 14.

This position is full-time with a comprehensive benefits package that includes health and life insurance, vision and dental benefits, flexible spending accounts, paid time off, sick leave and paid leave for all federal holidays, and participation in the Federal Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan (TSP with up to 5% government matching contributions).

ACCESSIBILITY

We are committed to an inclusive and accessible application process. If you need an accommodation due to a disability during any stage of the application or interview process, please contact us at NVX_LeadershipCenter@fd.org. If hired, we are dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations to support your success and ensure equal access to opportunities in the workplace.

HOW TO APPLY

We are reviewing applications on a rolling basis and will move quickly for candidates who are a strong match. First review will occur on April 20, 2026. To apply, please submit the following, in a single pdf, to NVX_LeadershipCenter@fd.org, include in the subject line **Senior Learning Designer B 2026**:

- A current resume highlighting relevant learning and development experience, particularly in designing or delivering leadership and management programs
- A cover letter — not a form letter. Tell us about a training program that deeply influenced you professionally and how it shapes the way you design and deliver programs today
- Optional: a brief description of a training program you built or significantly improved
- References will be required from candidates selected for interview