

**FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEFENDER OFFICE
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA
FEDERAL COURT DIVISION

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First Assistant

**JOB ANNOUNCEMENT
TRIAL UNIT**

RESEARCH & WRITING SPECIALIST

(At Least One Position)

Open Date: April 13, 2026

Close Date: When Filled

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is seeking candidates with excellent analytic, research and writing skills to fill the position of Research & Writing Specialist (RWS) in our Trial Unit. The RWS position is an attorney position. The successful applicant will support Assistant Federal Defenders that represent people charged with a myriad of federal criminal offenses involving firearms, controlled substances, immigration, kidnapping, terrorism, complex white-collar fraud, public corruption, child exploitation, human trafficking, robbery, federal capital homicide and other crimes. The RWS may also support attorneys in the Capital Trial Unit and participate in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania's re-entry court, which is one of the country's leading federal re-entry programs, as well as its mental health court and relapse prevention (drug) court.

Our office is in Philadelphia's vibrant Center City district, in newly renovated office space in the historic Curtis Building in Philadelphia, close to the federal courthouse and across from Independence Mall, the Liberty Bell and Washington Square Park.

In addition to assisting with legal research and drafting motions, briefs and other case filings, the duties of the TU Research and Writing Specialist include maintaining client contact, staying abreast of the latest developments in federal criminal law procedure including the bail reform act and the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines. The position also requires intellectual creativity for researching and presenting novel legal issues. The Research & Writing Specialist may also be required to assist with the recruitment and supervision of law interns as well as the semi-annual CJA training seminars. The FCDO also provides training and appropriate opportunities for interested TU Research and Writing Specialists to develop their written advocacy skills.

Candidates must possess excellent skills in legal analysis, research, and writing. Candidates should have demonstrated a commitment to poverty law or indigent criminal defense and should have experience in one of the following areas: criminal law, preferably federal practice and procedure and complex federal court litigation. Recent law school graduates with at least two years of relevant work

experience and outstanding academic record and writing ability may also be considered. Fluency (oral and written) in the Spanish language is helpful but not required. Candidates must be able to travel to the upper tier courthouses in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania - Allentown; Reading; and Easton - to assist Assistant Federal Defenders during motion hearings, sentencing hearings, and jury trials.

Applicants must be members in good standing of the Bar of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania or be willing to sit for the Pennsylvania bar examination, and they must, subsequent to hiring, gain admission to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Candidates must also be in good standing in every jurisdiction of which they are admitted.

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, two writing samples, and references to [Federal Community Defender Careers](#). Salary will be based upon experience consistent with federal guidelines and regulations. Kindly note that the filling of this position will be subject to the funding restrictions and approval of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. Candidates will be interviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled.

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity employer. We are dedicated to promoting a professional work environment that supports and respects all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.