

Position Announcement 21-05
RESEARCH AND WRITING SPECIALIST – CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT
Office of the Federal Public Defender
Western District of Texas (Austin)

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER for the Western District of Texas is accepting applications for a research and writing specialist for its Capital Habeas Unit in Austin, Texas. The Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) is responsible for representing death-sentenced prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings in the United States District Courts in Texas, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court. The CHU represents indigent, death-sentenced prisoners in all four federal districts in Texas.

Requirements. The research and writing specialist position is an attorney position. Applicants must be: (1) a graduate of an accredited law school; and (2) admitted to practice in good standing before the highest court of a state. A minimum of three years of specialized experience is preferred. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation, including but not limited to an FBI name and fingerprint check.

Duties. The primary duties of a research and writing specialist include advanced legal research and writing, review and analysis of records, and litigation assistance to other attorneys and investigators working in and with the CHU. A research and writing specialist is required to stay up to date on the latest developments in habeas corpus and criminal procedure; draft petitions and appellate briefs in the federal courts; analyze and research records; develop trusting relationships with clients; conduct field work, including gathering records and conducting investigations. The research and writing specialist is not an assistant federal public defender and does not ordinarily sign pleadings or make court appearances. The position requires travel.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant for research and writing specialist will have an established commitment to, and a clearly demonstrated aptitude for, excellence in criminal defense practice, including indigent representation and a reputation for integrity. The successful applicant will have strong legal research and word processing skills, will be able to analyze legal issues from complex records, and will write clearly and concisely. Applicants also must possess the ability to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, and court and agency personnel; be able to work effectively in a team-based environment; possess strong oral and interpersonal skills; and be able to work independently and set priorities to meet critical deadlines; and be committed to providing the highest quality representation to indigent prisoners. Appellate writing experience or experience in handling capital cases is preferred.

Salary and Benefits. The starting salary for a research and writing specialist falls within a range of \$53,917 (JSP-9, Step 1) to \$129,238 (JSP-15, Step 1) per annum. The salary of the successful applicant will commensurate with the person's qualifications and experience. The position is in the excepted service and does not carry the tenure rights of the competitive Civil Service. The position offers federal government employment benefits, including participation in health and life insurance, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

How to Apply. Qualified persons may apply by forwarding a letter of interest (mentioning announcement number 21-05), résumé, and representative writing sample. Legal experience should be described in detail. Send completed application to: Maureen Scott Franco, Federal Public Defender, Western District of Texas, 504 Lavaca St., Suite 960, Austin, Texas 78701-2860, or you may submit your letter of interest and resume in a single PDF document by email to TXW_Employment@fd.org. The document should be named as follows: "Announcement number, position title, last name, first name" (e.g. 21-05 CHU RAWS, Smith, John). Electronic submissions sent directly to the Defender will not be considered. For applicants with disabilities, this organization provides reasonable accommodations, which are determined on a case-by-case basis. To request a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or interview process, contact Personnel Administrator Victoria B. Longoria at (210) 981-2081. More than one position may be filled from this announcement. Position announced December 2, 2020 subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

The Federal Public Defender is an equal-opportunity employer.