

Position Announcement 23-15
ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER – 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 now accepting applications for the position of Assistant Federal Public Defender for the Capital Habeas Unit in Austin, Texas. The Capital Habeas Unit (CHU) represents indigent, death-sentenced Texas prisoners in federal habeas corpus proceedings in the four United States District Courts in Texas, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court.

Requirements. An Assistant Federal Public Defender must be (1) a graduate of an accredited law school; (2) licensed to practice in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas at the time of employment; and (3) admitted to practice before the Texas state bar within one year after employment begins. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation, including but not limited to an FBI name and fingerprint check and an IRS tax check. Employment also requires a person be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and provide proof of such prior to entrance on duty.

Duties. CHU attorneys represent death-sentenced prisoners in their federal habeas corpus proceedings, state clemency proceedings, and in proceedings related to execution dates. CHU attorneys carry a full caseload, representing clients in all stages of their federal court litigation—investigation, briefing at all levels of the court system, oral advocacy, and in clemency proceedings. Regular responsibilities include working with clients; digesting large case files and investigative materials; developing litigation strategies; drafting pleadings; conducting evidentiary hearings; presenting oral arguments; working with experts and other witnesses; and supervising teams of investigators, mitigation specialists, paralegals, and legal assistants. This position will sometimes require work on holidays, evenings, and weekends. Frequent and extended travel may also be required. Federal public defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have strong writing and oral advocacy skills, an established capacity or clearly demonstrated aptitude for excellence in criminal defense practice, a commitment to the representation of indigent accused persons, and a reputation for integrity. Applicants must also possess the ability to communicate effectively with a diverse clientele, clients' family members, colleagues, staff, and court personnel as part of their employment. It is preferred that applicants have capital litigation experience in direct appeal, state post-conviction, or federal habeas corpus proceedings. Finally, applicants must also be team-oriented and possess skills for collaboration, brainstorming, and compassionate representation. Fluency in Spanish is desirable, but not required.

Salary and Benefits. The salary of the successful applicant will be 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 does offer federal government employee benefits, including health and life insurance programs, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

How to Apply. Qualified persons may apply by sending a letter of interest (mentioning announcement 23-15), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample. Capital litigation 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 the required documents in a single PDF document named with applicant's "last name, first name-Announcement 23-15 CHU AFD" by email to TXW_Employment@fd.org. Electronic submissions sent directly to the Defender will not be considered. For applicants with disabilities, this organization provides reasonable accommodations, which are decided 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 April 6, 2023, subject to the availability of funds; open until filled.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender is an Equal Opportunity Employer.