FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA
Capital Habeas Unit for the Fourth Circuit
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Position Announcement
Assistant Federal Public Defender (CHU) - Remote

Posted: September 3, 2026.
Reposted from August 5 with revised experience requirements to expand the applicant pool. This is not an additional opening.

Closing date: Applications received by September 18, 2026, will receive priority consideration. The position will remain open until filled.

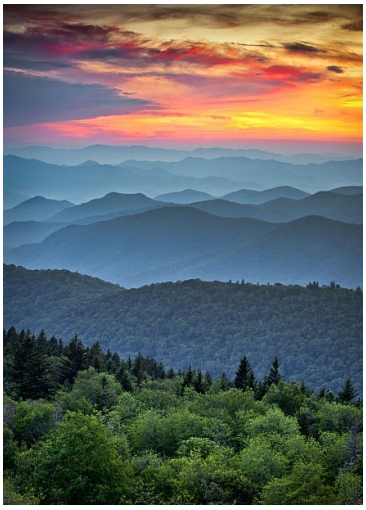
The Federal Public Defender for the Western District of North Carolina seeks an Assistant Federal Public Defender for its Capital Habeas Unit for the Fourth Circuit ("the CHU").

About Us: Our regional CHU represents indigent people sentenced to death in the state and federal courts within the Fourth Circuit's appellate jurisdiction. We have an experienced team of investigators, paralegals, and attorneys who are committed to innovative and passionate advocacy.

Our office is based in Charlotte, a compact and thriving city in the Carolina Piedmont. Charlotte offers expansive parks and greenways, premier theatre and concert venues, outstanding restaurants, professional sports, and a strong public school system. It's also within easy reach of the Carolina coast and the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains.

We recognize that we cannot serve the distinct needs of our clients without assembling a diverse team of dedicated professionals who work and advocate collaboratively on their behalf. We welcome applicants of any race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, age, and status. We are committed to ensuring an inclusive and equitable workplace. Click here for more information about our office. We have attached our office's Mission, Vision, and Values statements to this announcement.

Job Description: The scope of our work includes all stages of federal habeas corpus proceedings, stay litigation, method-of-execution challenges, and executive clemency. We have an active caseload in North Carolina, South Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and the United States Military. We regularly litigate in federal district courts, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. The attorney will have a full caseload of such matters, supervising the assigned paralegal and investigator. Core duties include: building relationships with clients; analyzing large case files to identify legal claims; directing and participating in investigation; working with experts; developing litigation strategies; motions practice and pleadings; conducting evidentiary hearings; and oral argument. The attorney will also serve as resource counsel and work collaboratively with outside attorneys and organizations. The position might require frequent travel and work outside of business hours, including weekends and holidays.



Requirements: Applicants should have substantial experience with legal research and complex and fact-intensive litigation, along with demonstrable skill in written and oral advocacy. Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited law school, a member in good standing of the highest court in the state where licensed, and committed to the representation of indigent clients.

This is a fully remote position within the States of the Fourth Circuit. Employees working remotely must reside, or be willing to relocate, within the Fourth Circuit for the duration of their employment.

Salary and Benefits: Starting salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications, with a current range of $78,459-$184,093 (if based in Charlotte, NC). This is an excepted service position with federal employee benefits, including health and life insurance and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) pension, Social Security, and Thrift Savings Plan. We observe Federal holidays and provide generous annual and personal leave. Salary is payable only by Electronic Funds Transfer (direct deposit).

Conditions of Employment: All application information is subject to verification. Applicants must be United States citizens, or persons authorized to work in the United States. Appointment to the position is provisional pending the successful completion of a background check. *A prior criminal conviction is not necessarily disqualifying*. Employees are members of the judicial branch and considered "at will" employees. Travel by a personal vehicle may be required.

How to Apply. Qualified persons should email a *single PDF* containing a letter of interest, résumé, and a writing sample of no more than ten pages to WDNCapplication@fd.org, with "Assistant Federal Public Defender (CHU)" in the subject line.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. No phone calls, please.

We welcome requests for accommodations from applicants with disabilities. Please submit any such requests to WDNCapplication@fd.org.

Interviews will be conducted in person or virtually.

This position is subject to the availability of funds.

The Federal Public Defender is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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John G. Baker
Federal Public Defender

Mission Statement

We are committed to excellence and the quest for justice of the indigent accused, focusing on our clients' needs with innovation, passion, and through dynamic advocacy.

Vision Statement

Advocacy requires engaging with every aspect of our clients' lives. We will defend our clients with purpose, compassion, and courage; identifying inequities that deny them of freedoms, drive their prosecutions, and inflate their sentences. We will work to reform the criminal legal system that is too often blind to these realities. We will partner with those who serve our community to help secure a future for our clients and their families. And we will strive to provide aid to and set an example for the present and future generations of our professions.

Values Statement

We are a diverse office motivated by our devotion to represent the indigent accused with respect and dignity, serving them with dynamic advocacy, excellence, and compassion. We are client-centered and driven by our passion and dedication to our clients. We are unwavering and purposeful in the representation of each client.

- **Dynamic Advocacy**: We are passionate about advocating for our clients. We listen to their stories, address their concerns, and advise them with compassion and expertise. We are innovative, intentional, and creative in our legal strategies. We are tenacious in our efforts to ensure that our clients' needs are always addressed, regardless of income or abilities.

- **Client-Centered Representation**: Clients' voices are at the core of every decision we make. We will represent and connect with our clients with integrity, dignity, and respect and be their voice. We embrace diversity and ensure that those we serve are the experts in their own life stories.

- **Excellence**: We seek the best practices and embody the highest standards of professionalism in all aspects of our representation. We are unafraid of innovation and embrace collaboration within and outside our discipline. We work with our colleagues and peers to hone our skills, challenge our practices, and raise the bar for our professions. We are tireless advocates for the indigent, dedicated and committed, accepting nothing less than excellence.

- **Diversity**: Diversity is essential to advocacy. We cannot represent our community unless we reflect its cultural differences. It makes us better advocates and is at the core of who we are. Diversity is fundamental to building strong relationships with our clients and colleagues. Our office encompasses and embraces people of different races, ethnicities, gender, ages, religious beliefs, sexual identities, etc. We are dedicated to having staff from all walks of life and will continue to recruit diverse talent.