

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT 17-11
SUPERVISORY 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 Supervisory Assistant Federal Public Defender for its newly forming 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. There are several CHUs in operation across the country and this will be one of two CHUs established for the first time in Texas. The CHU will represent death-sentenced prisoners in all four federal districts in Texas. You will have the opportunity to help build something from the ground floor. Skilled collaboration, strategic litigation, compassionate representation, and unique approaches to the issues affecting our clients are among the values we aim to foster in our CHU.

Requirements. The Supervisory Assistant Federal Public Defender for the CHU will be responsible for managing the CHU. The successful applicant must: (1) be immediately able to undertake the hiring, training, and supervision of a staff charged with the representation of petitioners in federal capital habeas proceedings; (2) be a talented legal writer and a proven advocate and litigator in capital habeas cases with substantial experience handling capital post-conviction or capital appellate cases; (3) be team oriented, committed to indigent criminal defense, and able to foster the office's role as a resource to the Criminal Justice Act panel members in capital habeas cases; and (4) be a graduate of an accredited law school, and be a member in good standing of the highest court in the state where licensed, but a Texas bar license is strongly preferred. All applicants must either be (a) admitted to and in good standing with the Texas State Bar, or (b) a member in good standing of another state's bar and be willing to take and able to pass the Texas State Bar examination within the next two offerings after employment begins, with admission to the Texas State Bar within two years after employment starts. J.D. degree and ten years' attorney experience required. Management experience and ten years of exclusively or primarily capital defense and/or state and/or federal post-conviction litigation experience are strongly preferred. A background in any area of mental health and/or social work is also helpful. This is a full-time, permanent position. Appointment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation, including, but not limited to, an FBI fingerprint and name check.

Duties. This position includes supervising attorneys and support staff; acting as liaison to the courts; communicating with other entities involved in representing capital defendants; and overseeing staff personnel actions as required. The CHU supervisor travels frequently for meetings with other CHU supervisors, for conferences and training. The CHU Supervisor oversees a large caseload, with cases at various litigation stages. These management duties include reviewing, researching, and drafting pleadings, briefs, and motions; conducting evidentiary hearings and oral arguments; reviewing large case files to identify issues, areas for further investigation, experts, etc.; developing litigation strategies; meeting with clients, experts, witnesses, family members, and other parties to gather evidence to formulate case strategies. The position may require working holidays, evening and weekend hours, and frequent travel within the United States.

Selection Criteria. The successful applicant will have 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 have strong writing and advocacy skills, the ability to work in a team environment, and effective organization skills, including the ability to set and achieve priorities. Applicants must also possess the ability to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, colleagues, staff, and court and agency personnel as part of their employment.

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. Persons may apply by sending a letter of interest (mentioning announcement number 17-11), a résumé, references, and representative writing sample to: Maureen Scott Franco, Federal Public Defender, Western District of Texas, 727 E. César E. Chávez Boulevard, Suite B-207, San Antonio, Texas 78206-1278. No electronically submitted applications will 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) 472-6700. Position announced July 28, 2017; open until filled.