OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDER 2026-11

(Multiple positions may be filled with this announcement.)

Location: New Haven or Hartford, Connecticut

Application deadline: Open Until Filled.

ABOUT US

The Federal Public Defender for the District of Connecticut is a law office that provides legal representation to persons charged with committing federal crimes who cannot afford to hire a private attorney. We represent the accused from arrest through trial and appeal, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

We are attorneys, paralegals, investigators, mitigation specialists, office administrators, and information technology specialists. Our team fosters interdisciplinary skill sets that ensure compassionate and comprehensive representation. We work together to uphold every person's right to be presumed innocent, to have a fair trial, to mitigation, and to have a fair sentence, if convicted. Our defense is vigorous, both at trial and on appeal. We advocate for humane sentences through client-centered representation, which honors an individual's lived experience.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice: We are committed to cultivating a culture of acceptance and connectedness that honors the diverse backgrounds of the people we represent. Our commitment to inclusion is integral to our commitment to a fair justice system. In recruiting members of our team, we welcome the full spectrum of humanity. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to our office because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived experiences. We know that the best legal representation occurs through a diverse, collaborative, and inclusive workforce.

THE OPPORTUNITY

We seek an Assistant Federal Defender who is available to begin employment no later than January 4, 2027. Availability to start earlier will be considered in the hiring decision. Office location to be determined, in New Haven or Hartford, Connecticut, with duties requiring work in both offices and travel to all seats of court and prison locations, including Central Falls, Rhode Island

The position primarily involves legal representation of indigent persons accused of federal crimes in the United States District Court. Responsibilities include managing a caseload with cases at varying stages of litigation; preparing pleadings, briefs, and motions; appearing on behalf of the client in court hearings and at other related proceedings; developing litigation strategies; meeting with clients, team members, experts, witnesses, and family members; and other duties as assigned. A large part of the caseload involves drug offenses, fraud, robbery, firearms offenses, and internet-related crimes.

The applicant should be prepared to immediately undertake the representation of clients in serious criminal cases and be able to manage a heavy caseload. Travel and working outside regular business hours are essential for the position, as are effective organizational skills and the ability to work in a team environment. Federal Public Defender attorneys may not engage in the private practice of law.

QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify, the applicant should have the following:

- A desire and capacity to work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Strong legal research and word processing skills.
- The ability to analyze legal issues from complex records and write clearly and concisely.
- Understanding of criminal law, criminal procedure, and evidence
- Knowledge of sentencing guidelines and evidence handling.
- Computer fluency in the Microsoft Office suite of programs, including Excel and Adobe Acrobat.
- The ability to exercise good judgment in a mature and diplomatic manner.
- A reputation for personal and professional integrity.
- Strong planning and organizational skills.
- The ability to keep confidences and protect legal privileges.
- The ability to recognize and analyze problems and recommend practical solutions.
- The desire to work with and on behalf of people from diverse backgrounds.
- A strong commitment to providing holistic representational support to indigent persons in proceedings under federal criminal law.
- Proficiency in Spanish (preferred).

The position requires that the applicant possess a valid driver's license, insurance, and own/operate a personal vehicle for business purposes (mileage is reimbursable).

Employment is subject to a satisfactory background investigation including, but not limited to an FBI fingerprint and name check.

EXPERIENCE/ EDUCATION

Applicants must be a graduate of an accredited law school and admitted to practice, in good standing, before the highest court of a state. Courtroom experience, as well as excellent research, writing, and oral advocacy skills, are required, as is a demonstrated commitment to indigent defense.

SALARY AND BENEFIT DETAILS

The 2026 salary plan for this position has a starting salary range of $86,596 to $197,100. The starting salary will be based on the candidate's professional attorney experience. The position offers federal employment benefits, including paid vacation, paid sick time, paid holidays, health insurance, life insurance, retirement plan, and participation in the Thrift Savings Plan (401k). Teleworking is available, consistent with office policy, court obligations, and position duties.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this position, email a single PDF containing a cover letter, resume, three references, and a writing sample to CTX_hiring@fd.org. Please include the job announcement number in the subject line.

We especially encourage applications from members of the BIPOC community, people affected by the criminal legal system, and people from other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups. We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully, no matter the allegation or circumstance.

The Federal Public Defender for the District of Connecticut is an equal opportunity employer.