



FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Northern and Southern Districts of Iowa

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT 2606
RESEARCH AND WRITING SPECIALIST

The Federal Public Defender for the Northern and Southern Districts of Iowa is accepting applications for the position of **Research and Writing Specialist** to be located at its **Des Moines** office.

ABOUT US: The Federal Public Defender Office operates under authority of the Criminal Justice Act (18 U.S.C. § 3006A) to represent individuals who are unable to afford counsel and are prosecuted in our federal courts. Our office is committed to serving the distinct needs of these individuals with a diverse group of dedicated professionals who



collaborate with, listen to, and advocate on behalf of one another. We welcome and value individuals of any race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, disability, age, veteran status, and other status protected by law. Click [here](#) for more information about our office.

JOB DESCRIPTION: This is an ideal position for an attorney with strong research and writing skills and a commitment to federal criminal defense work. The Research and Writing Specialist writes briefs, motions, petitions for certiorari, and legal memoranda for review and filing by the Federal Public Defender and staff attorneys. General duties include examining, analyzing, and researching records and issues; performing legal research and preparing legal documents; and assisting staff with all aspects of case preparation, training, and continuing legal education. The Research and Writing Specialist does not ordinarily sign pleadings or make court appearances but may be asked to do so in exceptional circumstances and with the authorization of the court. It is anticipated that the position will require travel throughout the state

of Iowa to attend trials and hearings to assist with research and writing needs that arise. The position may also require travel to assist with oral arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, typically in St. Louis, Missouri, or St. Paul, Minnesota.

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants must have (1) a law school degree (J.D.) with admission and good standing before the highest court of any state; (2) one year of law experience, criminal preferred; (3) knowledge of federal criminal law and procedures; (4) outstanding legal research and writing skills; (5) strong typing skills; and (6) a strong desire to be a team-player and an excellent coworker.

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 personal integrity. Applicant must also possess the ability to communicate effectively with clients, witnesses, staff, colleagues, and other individuals that they will come in contact with as part of their employment. Experience with and a working knowledge of the federal sentencing guidelines is preferred. Experience as a federal judicial clerk is also an asset, but it is not required.

BACKGROUND CHECKS: The selected candidate will be subject to a background check and subsequent favorable suitability determination as a condition of employment. Employment will be considered provisional until a satisfactory background check is confirmed.

SALARY AND BENEFITS: Compensation is determined by the Judicial Salary Plan, and will be commensurate with the candidate's experience within a range of JSP-9, Step 1 to JSP-15, Step 1. Federal government benefits apply, including health and life insurance, retirement, and the Thrift Savings Plan. Direct deposit of pay required. Some telework may be offered.

APPLICATION PROCESS: Electronically submit resume, cover letter, writing sample, and three references by March 30, 2026, to megan_magner@fd.org. **The email subject line must read:** Research and Writing Specialist 2606. Preference will be given to applications received by March 30, however, position will remain open until filled. Only applicants considered for an interview will be contacted. No telephone calls please. **This position is subject to funding availability.**

The Federal Public Defender is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.