

**FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
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### **Vacancy Announcement**

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**Position:** Capital Habeas Attorney

**Location:** Santa Ana, CA

**Deadline:** Applications accepted on rolling basis until vacancy is filled.

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The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is accepting applications for full-time attorney positions in its Capital Habeas Unit (CHU), stationed in Santa Ana, California. The CHU advocates for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of indigent persons sentenced to death. We provide the highest quality representation in post-conviction proceedings through diversity of experience, collaborative and thorough case development, focused litigation strategies, and skilled courtroom advocacy.

**Job Duties:** CHU attorneys represent death-sentenced inmates from California and other states in their federal habeas corpus proceedings. Attorneys in the CHU are expected to work on all stages of capital habeas cases, from pre-petition investigation through Supreme Court proceedings and clemency. General areas of responsibility include summarizing trial transcripts, drafting habeas corpus petitions, supervising teams of investigators and paralegals, directing investigation, working with experts, conducting evidentiary hearings, drafting briefs, presenting oral arguments, and drafting clemency petitions. In addition to representing capital inmates in their habeas proceedings, CHU attorneys represent noncapital habeas petitioners and federal criminal defendants.

**Requirements:** All applicants must have graduated from an accredited law school and be members in good standing of the California Bar or must be willing to sit for the next California Bar exam, if they are a member in good standing of another Bar. Preference will be given to applicants with at least three years of experience in state and/or federal criminal law, complex civil litigation, death penalty litigation, or habeas corpus litigation, or applicants with state or federal judicial clerkship experience.

**Selection Criteria:** Candidates must possess a commitment to the defense of death sentenced individuals; must have superior oral and written communication skills; and work well in teams.

A background investigation is required as a condition of employment. In line with current federal appropriations law, applicants must be United States citizens or permanent residents seeking

citizenship as described here: <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers/search-judiciary-jobs/citizenship-requirements-employment-judiciary>. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination will be requested of the candidate(s) selected for this position. Additional information regarding the office's vaccine policy will be provided to the selected candidate(s).

**Salary/Benefits:** This is a full-time, at-will position. Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience and is subject to direct deposit. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement, and a Thrift Savings Plan. For more information on benefits, see <http://www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits>.

**How to Apply:** Apply by emailing a letter of interest, résumé, two representative writing samples (limited to 15 pages each), and three references in a single PDF document addressed to Cuauhtemoc Ortega, Federal Public Defender, at [Employment@fpdcdca.org](mailto:Employment@fpdcdca.org) with the subject line: CAPITAL HABEAS ATTORNEY APPLICATION. All applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled. The Federal Public Defender's Office may fill future positions from this vacancy announcement. Please, no phone calls.

*The Federal Public Defender's Office for the Central District of California is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or age, are encouraged to apply.*