

**FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEFENDER OFFICE  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT**

DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA  
FEDERAL COURT DIVISION

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**LISA EVANS LEWIS**  
Chief Federal Defender

**JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CAPITAL HABEAS UNIT**

**CAPITAL CASE RESEARCH & WRITING SPECIALIST**

**(At Least One Position)**

**Posting Code 020180-22**

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is seeking candidates with litigation experience and excellent analytic, research and writing skills to fill the position of Research & Writing Specialist (RWS) in our Capital Habeas Unit. The Capital Habeas Unit, or CHU, represents death-sentenced prisoners in all stages of federal habeas corpus proceedings, including federally death-sentenced prisoners. This RWS position will also provide some research and writing support and consultation for FCDO trial clients against whom the federal government is seeking, or may seek, the death penalty. Our office is located in Philadelphia's vibrant Center City district, in newly renovated office space in the historic Curtis Center in Philadelphia, close to the federal courthouse and across from Independence Mall, the Liberty Bell and Washington Square Park.

The Research and Writing Specialist is an attorney who provides advanced legal research and writing services to staff attorneys working on capital cases. The CHU's Research and Writing Specialist is also an integral part of the capital representation team. In addition to assisting with legal research and drafting petitions, briefs, petitions for certiorari, and other case filings, the duties of the CHU Research and Writing Specialist include: remaining current with developments in criminal law and procedure and habeas corpus law and providing updates to legal staff; maintaining client contact; analyzing discovery materials; assisting with the planning and implementation of investigation relating to both the guilt and penalty phases of capital cases; and analyzing, researching and gathering complex legal and social history records. The FCDO also provides training and appropriate opportunities for interested CHU Research and Writing Specialists to develop their courtroom skills.

Candidates for this position must possess a law degree and be a member of a state bar. Eligibility for admission to the Pennsylvania Bar or willingness to sit for the next bar exam is required, as is admission to the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Candidates ideally will have at least two years of litigation experience and/or experience with litigation practices through a judicial clerkship. Candidates must possess a solid understanding of criminal law, criminal procedures, and evidence; have outstanding legal research and writing skills; be able to analyze complex legal issues; and be proficient with computer assisted legal research. Experience in federal criminal practice, with a demonstrated working knowledge of federal criminal law, sentencing, and procedure, is preferred. Familiarity with Eighth Amendment jurisprudence and capital case practice is preferred. Candidates also must be able to work collaboratively within a team setting and communicate effectively with clients, colleagues, staff, government, and court personnel. Candidates must have a commitment to the representation of the

indigent. Experience with Word is required; familiarity with CaseMap, Trial Director and PowerPoint, or a willingness to learn such trial technology, is required. An ability and willingness to travel as needed is essential. Fluency in the Spanish language is highly desirable. Candidates should understand that vaccinations are required, and Federal Community Defender Office will consider accommodations for disability and religious-based reasons.

Salary will be based upon experience consistent with federal guidelines and regulations. Kindly note that the filling of this position will be subject to the funding restrictions and approval of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume and writing sample to [Federal Community Defender Office Careers](#). Candidates will be interviewed on an ongoing basis until the position is filled. The Federal Community Defender Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply.

The Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania is an equal opportunity employer. We are dedicated to promoting a professional work environment that supports and respects all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply.