



INFORMATION AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Federal Public Defender (FPD) functions under the authority of 18 U.S.C. § 3006A(g)(2)(A) and the Criminal Justice Act Plan of the FPD's district and provides federal criminal defense services to individuals unable to afford counsel.

QUALIFICATIONS

To be qualified for appointment, an applicant must:

1. Be admitted to practice before the highest bar of at least one state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the United States Virgin Islands, and be a member in good standing of every bar of which they are members.
2. Have been engaged in the active practice of criminal law for a period of at least ten years, preferably with significant federal criminal trial and appellate experience.
3. Possess the ability to lead, manage, and effectively administer a federal public defender's office and a demonstrated commitment to maintaining an ethical and civil workplace environment, preferably with at least three years of supervisory or management experience.
4. Possess a commitment to supporting a diverse¹ workforce and creating fair and equal opportunities for employees to succeed.
5. Possess and have a verifiable reputation for:
 - (1) integrity and good character;
 - (2) a commitment to equal justice under the law and vigorous representation of those unable to afford counsel; and
 - (3) outstanding legal ability and competence (evidenced by substantial legal experience, ability to deal with complex legal problems, aptitude for legal scholarship and writing, and familiarity with courts and court processes).
6. Not be related by blood or marriage to a judge of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals or to a judge of the district court to be served, within the degrees specified in 28 U.S.C. § 458 at the time of the initial appointment.

¹ The terms "diverse" and "diversity" as used herein encompass the broad range of human experiences that inform the skills, talents, perspectives, and approaches of our workforce.

POSITION AVAILABILITY

The position of Federal Public Defender for the Central District of California is available immediately upon successful completion of a background investigation.

SALARY AND APPOINTMENT TERM

The term of appointment is four years, with potential for appointment to successive terms based upon demonstration of highly satisfactory performance as determined by a broad survey and performance evaluation. The current authorized annual salary is \$197,200.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The United States courts are an equal opportunity employer. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals encourages applications from all qualified individuals and seeks a diverse pool of applicants. All applications will be evaluated without regard to race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, sexual orientation, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, genetic information, age, disability, or service in the uniformed forces.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applicants should expect the entire selection and appointment process to take 6-9 months. A brief description of the process follows:

1. An ad hoc Local Screening Committee consisting of persons knowledgeable in federal criminal defense issues will review all timely received applications and interview candidates who meet the above qualifications. Interviews are usually held over a one or two-day period in the District where the opening is located. The initial interview typically occurs within two months after the application period closes.
2. The Local Screening Committee ranks the top candidates interviewed and forwards those rankings in a report to the Ninth Circuit Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders. The Standing Committee is composed of seven circuit judges of the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, one district judge who sits as an ex-officio member, and one CJA panel attorney and one federal defender who serve as consultants. The Standing Committee considers the recommendations of the Local Screening Committee and interviews the top-ranked candidates. It forwards one name for nomination, vote, and appointment by the Court of Appeals.
3. Once the Court of Appeals votes, the nominee undergoes an Office of Personnel Management background investigation that must be satisfactorily completed before appointment to a four-year term. The investigation may take 3-6 months to complete. The nominee also must complete financial disclosure forms. Upon determination that the background investigation has been completed satisfactorily, the Court issues an Order of Appointment and makes a public announcement.

Additional information is in the Court's Procedures Governing the Selection, Reappointment, and Removal of Federal Public Defenders, available at www.ca9.uscourts.gov/fpd.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. All applications must be completed using the provided Microsoft Word form. **If copying and pasting verbiage from a separate document, please do so by right-clicking on the application form and choosing the “Keep Text Only” paste option.** If you have any technical difficulties with the form, contact the Office of the Circuit Executive at cja@ce9.uscourts.gov.
2. Navigate the below form by using your keyboard’s up/down arrow keys or the Tab key.
3. A current copy of a resume or curriculum vitae (CV), transcripts from all law schools attended, and evidence of good standing in all state bars in which membership is held must be submitted with the completed application. If you are unable to obtain a transcript or state bar certificate by the application deadline, email cja@ca9.uscourts.gov or call 415.355.8988 for direction before submitting an application.
4. Any letters of reference (optional) must be submitted with the completed application. Letters of reference should be addressed to the Circuit Executive for the Ninth Circuit. Letters received after the closing date, unless specifically requested by the Office of the Circuit Executive, will not be considered.
5. Complete and affix a wet or electronic signature to the application as well as all authorizations and waivers.
6. Create one PDF document with the completed and signed application and any attachments.
7. The application must be emailed in PDF format to cja@ce9.uscourts.gov by the submission deadline. Please name the file “Lastname_Firstname.pdf” and ensure it consists of your completed and signed application and all attachments.
8. Reference checks may be conducted upon receipt of the completed application, as explained in Section H of the application form. Such contacts are not limited solely to those persons named on the application as “references.”

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

A PDF of your completed application, including all attachments, must be emailed to cja@ce9.uscourts.gov no later than **September 1, 2026**.

THE UNITED STATES COURTS ARE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYERS

If an applicant believes that they have been subjected to discriminatory treatment at any time during the recruitment process, or if an applicant has a complaint about any other aspect of the merit selection process, such complaint should be addressed to:

**Office of the Circuit Executive
Attn: Office of Workplace Relations
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit
P.O. Box 193939
San Francisco, CA 94119-3939
workplacedirector@ce9.uscourts.gov**