



FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER

Northern District of Ohio



ASSISTANT FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR OUR OFFICE IN **Cleveland, Ohio**

\$80,138 - \$197,100

Plus Excellent Benefits

Salary heavily dependent on prior experience

*This posting may be used to fill one or more vacancies
within the Trial Unit*

For Preferential Consideration, Apply By

March 4, 2026

(First Review, Open Until Filled)



WHY APPLY?

This is an exciting opportunity for anyone with a heart for public service and an interest in criminal law to join a dedicated team of professionals in one of the most vibrant locations in the country, Northeast Ohio! Located on the shores of Lake Erie, not only does Cleveland and our surrounding locations offer professional sports, but



also, the second largest theater district in the county, a world-class art museum, a world-class orchestra, and a national park with hiking, biking, kayaking, and fishing opportunities. If you are a Trial Attorney interested in a rewarding career in public service, want to work as part of a team of professionals dedicated to a cause, hope to have a tangible impact on your community, and share our belief that no one should be defined by their worst day, this is the right position for you!

WHAT WE DO

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio zealously represents and defends indigent citizens in order to preserve, protect and defend the principle of equal justice for all.

We do this in accordance with the Criminal Justice Act. We provide representation to individuals in federal criminal cases or under federal criminal investigation who are financially unable to retain counsel.



WHO WE ARE

We are attorneys, paralegals, investigators, office administrators, information technology specialists, and legal assistants, dedicated to defending our fellow citizens by providing them with legal counsel. We are zealous advocates for our clients, providing independent trial defense services free from outside influence. We represent every client within the guidelines of the laws, consistent with our professional ethics, and in accordance with all applicable rules of practice. We work together as a team of legal professionals to uphold every person's right to be presumed innocent, and when required to a fair sentence. Our defense is vigorous at trial, sentencing, and on appeal. We advocate for humane sentences by showing judges and prosecutors that we represent people, not criminals.

We are committed to cultivating a culture of acceptance and connectedness that honors the diverse backgrounds of the people we represent. We value diversity, and believe better legal representation occurs when members of the defense team have diverse backgrounds. We seek out and embrace the unique contributions that you can bring, including your culture, ethnicity, education, opinions, race, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veteran's status, religion, disability, or economic status.



THE ORGANIZATION

Established in August of 1973, the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio operates four offices, including a main office in downtown Cleveland and branch offices in Akron, Youngstown, and Toledo. Our staff of 51 employees is split between the Trial Unit, performing traditional indigent criminal defense and appeals, and the Capital Habeas Unit, providing post-conviction representation to inmates sentenced to death. Caseloads range from petty offenses to multi-defendant drug conspiracies, sophisticated computer crimes, terrorism, and smuggling cases. The position will be in the Cleveland office.

WHO YOU ARE

You have graduated from an accredited law school, are a pending admission to or are a member in good standing of any state bar, are pending admission to or are a member of the Ohio Bar or are willing to pursue admission to the Ohio Bar, and are willing to obtain admission to practice before the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States. A minimum of 3-years criminal litigation and/or appellate experience is preferred. Federal court experience is desirable.

You are trustworthy and reliable with good judgment and initiative. You can operate in a complex environment with minimal guidance to achieve expected results. As a trial attorney you have a demonstrated commitment to working with marginalized communities and with clients from a range of backgrounds. You put the client first while standing on your values, your personal and professional ethics, and your professionalism. You use sound judgment to carry out your responsibilities. You appreciate the importance of diversity. You always

partner with other members of the office, seek out the opinions of your colleagues and love to work as a team. You are candid in your advice, but respectful of others. You don't just recognize problems but identify solutions. You harness your creativity, legal acumen, and writing skills to overcome difficult problem sets. Above all, you maintain your high standards while treating our clients and your co-workers with empathy and understanding.

RESPONSIBILITIES

If selected as Assistant Federal Public Defender, you will initially begin your work in our Cleveland Office. While in Cleveland you will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with our team of Assistant Federal Public Defenders, Research and Writing Attorneys, Investigators, and Paralegals. In general, the ideal candidate will demonstrate capability and qualifications in the following areas:

- The initiative, judgement, and integrity to operate independently.
- Show strong trial skills, research and writing skills, and oral communication skills necessary to supervise, manage, and engage in difficult, complex, trial, and appellate work and litigation.
- Demonstrate good interoffice communication skills and the ability to maintain a friendly, open, demeanor during periods of increased work tempo.
- The ability to immediately handle a substantial case load.
- The ability to research and draft trial court and appellate briefs, including briefs and oral argument in the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States.
- Have a strong commitment to addressing the ongoing and underlying disparate treatment of people of color and marginalized communities within the criminal legal system.
- Engage in ongoing training and continuing legal education (CLE) to maintain and enhance professional skills.
- Serve as a mentor to interns, or newer attorneys when assigned, helping support a culture of learning and collaboration.
- The legal acumen necessary to identify and develop legal defenses, claims, and sentencing strategies,
- Serving as a resource to CJA panel attorneys.





IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education and Experience

To qualify, interested persons must have graduated from an accredited law school. Additionally, if not a member of the Ohio Bar the selected candidate must be willing to pursue admission to the Ohio Bar and be willing to obtain admission to practice before the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

Additionally, applicants must have a strong commitment to addressing the ongoing and underlying disparate treatment of people of color and marginalized communities within the criminal legal system.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- \$80,138 - \$197,100

(Dependent on education and years of relevant experience consistent with federal guidelines and regulations)

- Health & Life Insurance
- FERS Retirement
- Social Security
- Thrift Savings Plan
- Transit Subsidy Voucher
- 11 Federal Holidays
- Annual Leave and Sick Leave
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)

How To APPLY

All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **March 4, 2026** (first preferential review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To apply send a single Adobe .pdf document via email which includes a letter of interest, your resume, a completed AO78 Application for Judicial Employment, and three (3) references to ohn_employment@fd.org, subject line: "2026-02 Trial Assistant Federal Public Defender".

NOTICE

Employees are considered at-will and are not covered by the Civil Service Reform Act. This posting is subject to the availability of funds. The position offers responsibility, independence, dynamic teamwork, and generous federal benefits. The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Northern District of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Employment is provisional pending the successful completion of a required background check. You must be a United States citizen or eligible to work in the United States.