



# United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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## NEWS RELEASE

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## **Corey Endo Appointed as New Federal Public Defender for Western District of Washington**

SAN FRANCISCO — Judges of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have selected Corey Endo as the next federal public defender for the Western District of Washington. She succeeds Rene Valladares, federal public defender for the District of Nevada, who served as interim defender after former defender Colin Fieman entered private practice in January 2026. Endo began her four-year term on June 17, 2026.

“As a long-time advocate for indigent defendants in the Western District of Washington, Corey brings to the position extensive criminal defense experience, a wealth of institutional knowledge, a client-centered approach to litigation, and a strong dedication to equal justice. She is deeply committed to the office’s mission and people and will be an exceptional addition to the federal defender community at large,” said Circuit Judge Kim McLane Wardlaw, who chairs the Ninth Circuit’s Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders.

Endo said, “I am fortunate to have spent nearly my entire legal career with the Federal Public Defender Office, and I am thrilled and humbled to now serve as the Defender. The office is filled with smart, dedicated, and creative professionals who work to protect our clients’ constitutional rights and to ensure that they are treated with dignity, that their stories are heard, and that they have hope for their futures. I look forward to working with my amazing colleagues to continue our tradition of excellent representation.”

Endo joined the Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington in 2005 and has served as a research and writing attorney, assistant FPD, and, most recently, first assistant FPD. In these roles, she has handled direct appeals, federal habeas litigation and complex federal criminal cases, including challenges to the Bureau of Prisons’ implementation of the First Step Act and prolonged immigration detention.

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Page 2 of 2

Endo earned a Bachelor of Arts in biology and society from Cornell University in 1995. She received her Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law in 2002, graduating magna cum laude and Order of the Coif. At NYU, she served as notes development editor of the NYU Law Review, received a Community Appreciation Award, and was named a McKay Scholar, an honor awarded to students in the top 25% of the class. Prior to joining the Western Washington FPDO, Endo worked as a staff attorney at the Washington Appellate Project, a contract attorney with Reprieve UK on a Tennessee capital case, and a law clerk to the Honorable Martha Craig Daughtrey of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington is headquartered in Seattle and maintains a branch office in Tacoma. The office employs approximately 54 staff members, including attorneys, paralegals, investigators and administrative personnel. In fiscal year 2025, the office opened 1,204 cases and closed 1,136 cases.

The Office of the Federal Public Defender was created by Congress to fulfill the constitutional requirement that financially eligible individuals charged with crimes in the federal justice system be provided with professional legal representation at no cost. By statute, judges of the courts of appeals select and appoint the federal public defender for a renewable four-year term. In the Ninth Circuit, applicants are evaluated by both a local screening committee and the court's Standing Committee on Federal Public Defenders, applying Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines. Reappointment to additional terms is based on a comprehensive evaluation of the federal public defender's performance, including an invitation for public comment.

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