

FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER
Western District of Washington

Colin Fieman
Federal Public Defender

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First Assistant Defender

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT
Social Worker/Mitigation Specialist – Seattle/Tacoma, Washington

Position No. 24-02
Announced: **January 2, 2024**
Closes: Priority given to applications received by **February 2, 2024**

The Office of the Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Washington (FPD) is accepting applications for a full-time criminal defense mitigation specialist (MS) with a duty station in the Seattle or Tacoma office. The MS will work on cases throughout our district assigned to both the Seattle and Tacoma FPD offices. The FPD operates under the authority of the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A, to provide legal representation to people charged with committing federal crimes who cannot afford to hire an attorney. The Court appoints our attorneys to represent accused persons before charges are filed, upon arrest, for the appeals process, and through federal habeas corpus review. Candidates should demonstrate a strong background in social work practice and be dedicated to defending those accused of committing crimes even when the evidence against them appears strong. The candidate should be self-motivated, resourceful, creative, and client-centered, and demonstrate a commitment to social justice, the promotion of equity, and anti-oppressive practices. We provide a vigorous defense at all stages of our clients' cases. The MS will advocate for humane sentences by developing mitigation evidence to present judges fully developed views of our clients and their lives, not merely their charges. The MS will support the office in providing a holistic approach to legal representation. This position is supervised by the Chief Investigator.

Responsibilities: The program consists of three main practice areas:

- 1. Client-level practice:** The MS department provides intensive clinical case management services and advocacy for clients at all stages of their criminal cases by conducting biopsychosocial assessments and referrals to housing, mental health and substance use treatment, employment, and medical services. The MS conducts crisis assessment and intervention, offers emotional support to clients, proposes alternatives to incarceration, and helps develop release plans. The MS develops sentence mitigation by conducting extensive interviews of clients, families, and other life-history witnesses. The MS gathers and evaluates behavioral health, medical, and social service records. The MS composes comprehensive social history reports, family impact statements, reentry and treatment plans, research memos, and diagnostic screenings, and guides retention of behavioral health experts. The MS provides social work support to clients of the federal drug court (DREAM). The MS provides advocacy and support to clients during court hearings.
- 2. Office-level practice:** The MS department is available to colleagues to provide individual case consultation and psychoeducation. The MS plans and delivers continuing education to colleagues and attorneys on the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) panel. The MS department oversees the MSW practicum program, selecting, training, and supervising social work graduate students.

3. **Community-level practice:** The MS department liaises with the Bureau of Prisons, US Probation and Pretrial Services, federal defender offices nation-wide, and local agencies serving system-involved clients. The MS co-facilitates reentry programming for in-custody clients, participates in local reentry coalitions, and develops and maintains partnerships with local service providers.

Selection Criteria: Preference will be given to candidates with a minimum of two years of post-graduate practice experience and/or those with a clinical license, such as a LICSW. Experience with forensic social work, the criminal legal system, mental health and addiction treatment, intellectual and developmental disability, or treatment of trauma is desired. The candidate should also demonstrate cultural humility. This position requires occasional travel. Candidates should have strong oral and written advocacy and communication skills and be comfortable working independently and on teams. The candidate should be comfortable providing court testimony.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of federal court procedures.
- Experience drafting mitigation reports.
- Familiarity with Western Washington and community resources.
- Ability to speak, read and write in Spanish.

Requirements: A Master of Social Work (MSW) degree or a graduate degree in a related field, such as psychology or counseling, is required. The candidate must possess a valid driver's license and be able to drive (including long distances). Applicants must be U.S. citizens, or meet the [requirements](#) of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and should be available to start by February 13, 2023. An offer of employment is conditioned upon the successful applicant being vaccinated against COVID-19 as of their hire date. As a condition of employment, staff members must be fingerprinted and complete background checks. A prior criminal conviction is not necessarily disqualifying.

Salary and Benefits: This position has a starting salary range of \$81,242 to \$136,832 (Grade 11, Step 1 to Grade 14, Step 1) and full performance salary range of \$105,612 to \$177,885 (Grade 11, Step 10 to Grade 14, Step 10) based on the Judicial Salary Plan effective January 1, 2024. Salary will be based on professional experience. Partial telework is available for this position. Benefits include health and life insurance, plus 11 paid federal holidays, 13 days of paid sick leave, and 13 days of paid vacation leave annually. (The rate of vacation accrual increases with years of service.) The position is eligible for the [Federal Employees Retirement System](#) and the [Thrift Savings Plan](#), which matches up to 5% of employee contributions. Salary is paid biweekly and only by direct deposit.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion: Our office values diversity, is committed to equity and inclusion, and aspires to create a culture of mutual respect, collaboration, openness, and humility that honors the people we represent. We believe representation is better when members of the defense team have diverse backgrounds and experiences. We seek a mitigation specialist who shares this belief and commitment. We embrace the unique contributions our employees can bring to the FPD because of their backgrounds, social identities, and lived

experiences. We are interested in applicants' talent, intelligence, dedication, persistence, and desire to see that all people are treated fairly and respectfully—no matter the allegation or circumstance. The FPD seeks applications from a diverse group of qualified individuals in terms of race, ethnicity, nation of origin, culture, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual identity, education, opinions, age, languages spoken, veteran status, disability, religion, and socio-economic circumstance. We especially encourage applications from members of the BIPOC community, people affected by the criminal legal system, and people from other underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

How to Apply: Qualified persons may apply by emailing a letter of interest, résumé, and two professional references (including names, email addresses, and telephone numbers) to:

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Attn. Human Resources

Please submit application materials as a combined PDF via email to wawpersonnel@fd.org and reference "Mitigation Specialist" in the subject line. Priority is given to applications received by **February 2, 2024**. Only applicants granted interviews will be contacted.

NO TELEPHONE INQUIRIES.