UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

More than one position will be filled from this advertisement

POSITION: Pro Se Staff Attorney

DUTY STATION: Baltimore or Greenbelt Maryland depending on court needs;
Remote flexibilities possible

OPENING DATE: September 25, 2026
CLOSING DATE: Open until filled with first preference given to applications received by October 19, 2026

SALARY:

JSP 11 = $ 85,447	graduation from an accredited law school
JSP 12 = $102,415	one year of post-law school graduation experience and bar membership
JSP 13 = $121,785	two years of post-law school graduation experience and bar membership
JSP 14 = $143,913	three years of post-law school graduation experience and bar membership

Starting salary is commensurate with qualifications, experience, and based upon Judicial Salary Plan (JSP) guidelines. Advanced step placement may be available for current or prior federal employees under highest previous rate rules.

Position Overview

The United States District Court for the District of Maryland is seeking to hire a Pro se Staff Attorney. The Pro Se Staff Attorney works directly under the supervision of the Supervising Staff Attorney and the Chief Judge. The Staff Attorney assists all judges in handling prisoner civil rights complaints and state and federal prisoner habeas corpus petitions including case screening, research, and drafting opinions and orders. Pro Se Staff Attorney positions are subject to available funding provided by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, dependent upon annual court filings.

Duties and Responsibilities

Duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Substantive screening of prisoner civil rights complaints and habeas petitions.
- Drafting appropriate proposed opinions and orders for review by District Judges, including rulings on motions to dismiss and for summary judgment, and drafts of final habeas opinions.
- Case management, including monitoring dockets to ensure the proper progress of cases.
- Providing information, guidance, and advice to judges and chambers law clerks on legal issues relating to prisoner cases.
- Keeping current on the law and legislation affecting prisoner litigation.
- Assisting staff with interpretation of pleadings filed by self-represented litigants.
- Performing other duties as assigned.

Qualifications and Requirements

Required:

- Graduate of an accredited law school.
- Strong academic background and demonstrated research and writing ability.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills, and the ability to work effectively with a variety of people in person and on the phone.
- Excellent organizational skills and experience handling multiple tasks and projects.
- Ability to work with strict deadlines and in a fast-paced environment.
- Maturity, good judgment, and high ethical standards.
- Ability to work independently and as a team player, with a positive work attitude.

Preferred:

- Working knowledge of prisoner and constitutional law.
- Experience assisting self-represented litigants.
- Clerkship experience.
- Legal work experience handling prisoner civil rights and/or habeas cases.

Federal Benefits

- Health, dental, vision, life, and long-term care insurance programs available.
- Flexible spending accounts for health and dependent care available.
- Vacation/annual leave (13-26 days increasing with years of service), sick leave (13 days per year) and paid holidays (11 days).
- Paid parental leave (12 weeks) for the birth or adoption of a child after one year of employment.
- Retirement (FERS - Federal Employees Retirement Program) with employer and employee contributions as well as matching contributions in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) 401K style plan.
- Parking is available near the courthouse at no cost as funding allows as well as the option to participate in the commuter benefit programs.
- The U.S. District Court is a qualifying employer for possible Public Service Loan Forgiveness.
- Additional information about the federal judiciary's benefits can be found at www.uscourts.gov/careers/benefits

Application Procedure

Qualified applicants should submit **one document in PDF format** via email to: jobs@mdd.uscourts.gov that includes the following:

- A **cover letter** addressing the qualifications, skills and experience necessary to perform the job.
- A current **resume**, including a list of professional **references**.
- A completed **AO78 Form**, Application for Federal Judicial Branch of Employment, which can be found on the Employment Opportunities page of the court's website.
- A **writing sample** of at least five pages is required.

Failure to submit a complete and signed cover letter, resume, AO78, and writing sample will result in immediate disqualification. The Description of Work section of the AO-78 must be completed to include salary information; merely indicating "see resume" is not acceptable. Incomplete and/or unsigned applications will not be considered, returned or retained. Only applicants selected for an interview will be contacted and must travel at their own expense.

- To ensure first consideration, applications should be received by October 19, 2026. Include the job title for which you are applying in the subject header of the email.
- Applications will be reviewed, and interviews scheduled on a rolling basis. This position may close without notice once a qualified candidate is selected.

Conditions of Employment

- The United States District Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applications will be reviewed to identify the best qualified candidates.
- In the event a position becomes vacant in either division or in a similar classification within a reasonable time from the original announcement, the court may select an appointee from the candidates who responded to the initial announcement without posting the vacancy.
- Applicants must be a United States citizen or national or a permanent resident who is seeking citizenship in the United States. Successful candidate for this position is subject to a full fingerprint, and background records check and mandatory electronic direct deposit of salary payment.
- This is a sensitive position within the Federal Judiciary. The selected candidate will be hired provisionally, pending the successful completion of the required background investigation and favorable employment suitability determination.
- Selected applicant will be required to complete a one-year probationary period. Failure to successfully complete the probationary period may result in termination of employment. Positions in the United States Courts are excepted appointments, are not under the Civil Service System, and are "at will" employees.
- Employees must adhere to the Code of Conduct of Judicial Employees which is available at: https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/judiciary-policies/ethics-policies/code-conduct-judicial-employees
- The court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, withdraw the job announcement, and/or to commence interviews immediately, any of which actions may occur without prior written or other notice.

For more information on the United States District Court, for the District of Maryland, please visit our website, www.mdd.uscourts.gov .