October 12, 2023

LAW CLERK POSITIONS – 2024

Position: Law Clerk, Portland, Eugene, and Medford Offices

Employer: Federal Public Defender
101 SW Main Street, Suite 1700
Portland, OR 97204

Description: The Federal Public Defender represents indigent people charged with federal crimes, including bank robbery, gun and drug crimes, immigration violations, and various frauds. The Federal Public Defender is committed to the pursuit of justice through zealous advocacy in federal court for the constitutional rights and inherent dignity of individuals who are accused or convicted of crimes and cannot afford their own lawyer. We advance the rights of all individuals by developing innovative approaches in our representation that promote systemic change and by serving as a valuable resource to the larger legal community. Because we know that insight from a diversity of experiences and perspectives will enhance our work, we are committed to fostering diversity in our office. We invest in recruiting, training, and retaining colleagues who demonstrate experience with, knowledge of, and sensitivity to the needs of culturally diverse and oppressed populations.

Law clerks assist the defenders by researching legal issues and drafting trial memoranda, motions to suppress, jury instructions, appellate briefs, and other legal writing. Typical research topics involve search and seizure issues, the right to counsel, outrageous government misconduct, evidence questions, and constitutional issues in habeas cases. In addition to the research and writing, clerks also have the opportunity to watch proceedings in the U.S. District Court and the Ninth Circuit, and to attend attorney staffings, meetings, and moot court arguments. Students also help interview clients and negotiate cases on the monthly violation and misdemeanor docket (and certified law clerks may have the opportunity to represent clients in misdemeanor bench trials). We are currently recruiting for spring
and summer 2024, but will also accept applications for fall 2024. We accept applications for our Portland, Eugene, and Medford offices. The position is full time during the summer months and can be part time (16 hours a week) or full time during the school year.

Qualifications: Law clerks must be creative thinkers and have excellent legal research and writing skills. Students with a demonstrated interest in criminal law and/or public service are preferred. A demonstrated commitment and comfort working with diverse communities and with clients from a range of backgrounds is preferred. Students must have finished their first year of law school by the time they begin work. Students should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Positions: 8-12 (summer), 4-8 (fall and spring)

Salary: The position can be made up of a combination of work study, externship, public interest stipend, volunteer, etc. Please contact Erin J. Severe with questions.

Contact: Erin J. Severe, Research and Writing Attorney

To Apply: Send a cover letter, resume, 5-page writing sample (excerpts okay) and unofficial transcript to Erin Severe at Erin_Severe@fd.org (please include the term “FPD application” at the start of your subject line). Please indicate what position(s) (spring, summer, and/or fall) you are applying for.

Deadline: Applications will be considered and offers will be made on a rolling basis. We anticipate filling the summer positions by the end of February.