



Vacancy Announcement United States District Court Western District of Missouri

Position: Prisoner Pro Se Staff Attorney
Position Number: PSA-02-15
Location: Kansas City, Missouri

Salary Range: JSP 11/01-14/10 (\$58,582-\$128,223)
(based on experience, qualifications, and/or current grade)

Opening Date: February 12, 2015
Closing Date: February 26, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. CST

Due to a retirement, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri is seeking a Staff Attorney to handle pro se prisoner cases. The Western District is a consolidated court comprised of three divisional offices (Kansas City, Jefferson City and Springfield) and approximately 270 total employees. Attorneys currently employed by other Districts that are willing to relocate are welcome to apply, and all applicants should visit www.mow.uscourts.gov for general information about the Western District (WDMO). This is a full-time, non-term position. **All applicants must possess prior experience handling prisoner litigation.**

Position Description

The successful candidate will team with two other staff attorneys to manage the court's prisoner pro se docket, providing legal research, and drafting orders and recommendations for the district judges on all pro se prisoner complaints and filings. Prisoner Pro Se (PPS) staff attorneys screen all prisoner submissions, handling cases from inception through discovery, dispositive motions and orders on the merits. If a case will proceed to trial, it is then typically forwarded to chambers law clerks.

The primary types of cases handled by the PPS Office are habeas corpus petitions filed pursuant to Sections 2254, 2255 and 2241, and civil rights complaints filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983 and 28 U.S.C. § 1331. The Office also handles any type of civil case a pro se prisoner files, including diversity cases, FOIA, FTCA, mandamus and Rule 60(b) motions.

Primary Duties

Duties of the Pro Se Staff Attorney include but are not limited to the following:

- Screening all new cases filed by pro se prisoner litigants and making appropriate decisions or recommendations with respect to the filings;
- Providing substantive legal review of all cases and researching legal issues raised by the pleadings;
- Preparing draft orders and opinions for the district judges;
- Managing the progress and disposition of all cases in a timely and efficient manner, and ensuring the timely resolution of all pending motions;

- Communicating with pro se litigants (as well as family and other representatives) regarding the handling and progress of cases;
- Evaluating policies and procedures to determine innovations for handling prisoner litigation and increasing the effectiveness of the PPS Office;
- Compiling statistics and preparing periodic reports, which reflect the status and flow of cases;
- Supervising law student interns as necessary;
- Staying abreast of changes in the law in the prisoner area or in relation to prisoner civil rights claims;
- Providing general information, guidance, and advice to judges, chambers staff and the Court Executive regarding pro se prisoner cases; and
- Working with the Information Technology (IT) department to utilize technology to improve PPS case processing and to further the mission of the Office.

Qualifications

- A Juris Doctorate degree from a law school of recognized standing and current bar membership in good standing. (Applicants with less than three years of post-graduate work experience should have graduated in the top quarter of their class. Law review membership is not required but highly desirable).
- Prior work experience involving prisoner habeas or civil rights litigation is required. Prior work experience within the federal court system or directly with pro se litigants is highly desirable.
- Ability to analyze complex legal issues and to comprehend a wide range of legal concepts, principles, and practices as they relate to pro se litigation.
- Ability to perform legal research accurately and expeditiously.
- Proficiency in the use of computers and applicable software applications, particularly Microsoft Office applications (Word, PowerPoint and Excel), legal research databases and the CM/ECF database.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to manage priorities with limited supervision.
- Ability to communicate effectively with others, both orally and in writing.
- Ability to prioritize work to meet deadlines, maintain confidentiality, and interact tactfully with litigants, attorneys and co-workers.
- Ability to understand statistical data, and to perform data analysis using various evaluation methodologies and tools.
- High ethical standards and a positive work attitude.

Benefits

Employees of the United States Courts are entitled to benefits including leave program and periodic salary increases, 10 paid holidays each calendar year, insurance plans (Health, Dental, Vision, Life, Long-Term Care, and Long-Term Disability), Flexible Spending Accounts (Health-care and Dependent-Care reimbursement accounts), Retirement System and Thrift Savings Plan participation (with up to 5% employer matching contributions). This position is subject to mandatory electronic direct deposit of salary payment.

Application Procedure

Qualified applicants must submit all the following:

- A cover letter;
- A resume;
- A legal writing sample; and
- Completed AO-78 Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment (<http://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/FormsAndFees/Forms/AO078.pdf>).

Materials should be received no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on the closing date to:

Kathy Popejoy
U.S. District Court
Charles Evans Whittaker Courthouse
400 East 9th Street, Room 1510
Kansas City, MO 64106
Email: kathy_popejoy@mow.uscourts.gov

Only qualified applicants who submit all of the items listed above will be considered for this position.

As a condition of employment, the selected candidate will be subject to an FBI background check. Employment will be considered provisional until the FBI background check is completed. The court is not authorized to reimburse expenses for relocation. Only those candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. The court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement. The Western District of Missouri is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity in the work place.