



**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK**

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

<b>Position:</b>	Pro Se Law Clerk	<b>Announcement #:</b>	26-CO-02
<b>Appointment Type:</b>	Full-time, Temporary Two-year temporary appointment with the possibility of extension based on caseload and other factors.		
<b>Location:</b>	Charleston, WV		
<b>Starting Salary:</b>	<a href="#">JSP 11 – 14 (\$74,678 - \$163,514) - Rest of the United States Locality Pay Area</a> <i>Starting salary depends upon experience, qualifications, and prior Federal experience.</i>		
<b>Opening Date:</b>	April 2, 2026		
<b>Closing Date:</b>	Open until filled. Applications received by <b>April 15, 2026</b> , will receive first consideration.		
<b>Open To:</b>	All qualified applicants		

**Position Overview:**

This United States District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia is seeking qualified applicants for a Pro Se Law Clerk position. This position involves working directly with judges on managing prisoner civil rights and habeas corpus cases. Duties include screening prisoner civil rights complaints and habeas corpus petitions. The Pro Se Law Clerk independently conducts legal research, reviews case records/filings and drafts proposed opinions, memorandum decisions, and orders. This position provides objective advice to judges, chambers, and court staff and provides information to litigants and attorneys. In addition, pro se law clerks work closely with judges assisting with various pretrial conferences and trials. While the appointing authority for this position is the Chief U.S. District Judge, this position reports to and works under the direction of the assigned District Judge(s) and the Clerk of Court.

The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia has points of holding court located in Beckley, Bluefield, and Huntington, with the main office located in Charleston, West Virginia. The court is comprised of over 100 employees who support five active Article III judges, two senior Article III judges, and three full-time magistrate judges. We are part of the judicial branch, one of the three separate branches of the federal government. We independently set our own employment policies, such as remote work and performance management.

**Representative Duties:**

- Performs substantive screening after filing of all prisoner and inmate petitions and motions, including state habeas corpus petitions, motions to vacate sentence, and civil rights complaints. Drafts appropriate recommendations and orders for the Court's signature.
- Reviews all complaints, petitions, and pleadings that have been filed to determine issues involved and basis for relief.
- Performs research, as required, to assist the Court in preparing opinions.
- Maintains liaison between the Court and litigants. Corresponds with other officials, such as the U.S. Attorney, as required.

- Evaluates present procedures to determine new innovations for increasing the effectiveness in handling complaints, petitions, and pleadings. Reviews the docket of pending prisoner and inmate litigation to assure the proper progress of such cases and advises the Court of those cases where action by the Court is appropriate.
- Compiles statistics and prepares periodic reports, as required, that reflect the status and flow of cases. Identifies problem areas, makes recommendations, and offers solutions, as required by the Court, Administrative Office, and other officials.
- Keeps abreast of changes in the law to aid the Court in adjusting to new legislation in the pro se area.
- Provides information, guidance, and advice to judges, magistrate judges, and other personnel working in the pro se area. Advises appropriate personnel on the status of particular cases.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

### **Required Qualifications:**

To qualify for the position of pro se law clerk, an individual must be a law school graduate (or be certified as having completed all law school studies and requirements and merely awaiting conferment of degree) from a law school of recognized standing, and have demonstrated one or more of the following accomplishments or proficiencies: 1) Standing within the upper third of the law school's class from a law school on the approved list of either the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools; 2) Experience on the editorial board of a law review of such a school; 3) Graduation from such a school with an LLM degree; or 4) Proficiency in legal studies that, in the opinion of the appointing judge, is the equivalent of one of the above.

The candidate must also possess superior research and writing skills, exhibit strong analytical ability and demonstrate excellent verbal, written and interpersonal skills. The candidate must also be able to maintain confidentiality, handle sensitive information, and exercise discretion at all times. Demonstrated skill in providing excellent customer service is necessary, and a successful candidate will exhibit the qualities of judgment, temperament, integrity, trustworthiness, and strong character required of an officer of the judiciary.

### **Court-Preferred Qualifications:**

- Previous federal clerkship experience and/or prior litigation experience in the private or public sector gained after law school graduation.
- Experience in planning and organizing work, establishing priorities, and working independently.
- An understanding of federal habeas corpus law and proficiency in the use of LEXIS and WESTLAW.
- Outstanding legal research/writing skills. Ability to communicate clearly, concisely, and informatively, both orally and in writing. Experience reviewing documents and extracting data.

### **Employee Benefits:**

This position is covered by the Judiciary Salary Plan (JSP) and is entitled to benefits that include: a choice of a health benefits plan from among several options, federal dental and vision insurance programs, life insurance, a flexible benefit program (pre-tax contributions for health insurance premiums, health care and dependent care expenses), accrual of 13-26 days of annual leave annually, accrual of 13 days of sick leave annually, periodic salary increases, 11 paid holidays per year, Public Service Loan Forgiveness ([PSLF](#)), and onsite physical fitness facility. Part-time telework is available after a training period based on the needs of the workload and determined by the supervisor.

### Information for Applicants:

The United States District Court is part of the Judicial Branch of the United States government. A paid employee of the United States federal government must be a U.S. citizen or eligible to work in the United States (see full citizenship requirements [here](#).) Judiciary employees serve under excepted appointments (not civil service) and are “at-will” employees. This position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer (direct deposit) for payment of net pay. Employees are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees, which is available to applicants to review upon request. The selected candidate(s) is subject to a background check, including FBI fingerprint check, and appointed provisionally, pending a favorable suitability determination.

### Application Process:

Qualified applicants must submit the following in a **single PDF document**:

- Cover letter,
- Résumé,
- Completed Form [AO-78 Application for Judicial Branch Employment](#) (Completion of Optional Background Information section, #19-21 **is** required),
- Copies of final law school transcripts and Bar Membership (if applicable), and
- Legal Writing Sample.

Application packets should be submitted via email to [Human\\_Resources@wvsc.uscourts.gov](mailto:Human_Resources@wvsc.uscourts.gov), referencing vacancy **#26-CO-02 Pro Se Law Clerk** in the subject line. To receive first consideration, application materials must be received by **April 15, 2026**, but the position will remain open until filled.

Accurate compliance with these instructions is a factor expressly considered in the evaluation of the application. Applicants selected for interviews must travel at their own expense. More than one position may be filled.

*The United States District Court is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity, equity, and inclusivity in the workplace.*