



United States District Court, Northern District of New York
100 S. Clinton St.
Syracuse, NY 13261
www.nynd.uscourts.gov

Announcement Number: 26-DC-06

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Pro Se Law Clerk
Status: Part-Time, Temporary, 20 hours per week (Salary will be pro-rated)
Location: Syracuse or Albany, New York
Grade Level/Salary: Syracuse Pay Table Grade 11 (\$74,678) - Grade 14 (\$125,776)
Albany Pay Table Grade 11 (\$77,045) – Grade 14 (\$129,763)
Placement above step 1 is based on previous federal service and highest previous rate rule. Final salary setting based on review and approval of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Court.
Opening Date: February 13, 2026
Closing Date: Open Until Filled
Projected Start Date: April/May 2026

Introduction:

The Northern District of New York is looking to fill a Pro Se Law Clerk position. This position is a part-time, temporary opportunity for one year and one day. This position may be extended but cannot exceed four years. The Pro Se Law Clerk position is located in Syracuse or Albany Office; however, the successful candidate may qualify for a regular recurring telework, or a fully remote position.

The incumbent provides legal advice and assistance to the Court in connection with pro se prisoner petitions and motions, concentrating on habeas corpus petitions and prisoner civil rights cases.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Performs substantive screening of prisoner and inmate petitions and motions, primarily in habeas corpus cases, as well as in 1983 civil rights cases. Drafts appropriate recommendations and orders for the Court's signature.
2. Reviews all complaints, petitions, and pleadings that have been filed to determine issues involved and basis for relief.
3. Performs research, as required, to assist the Court in preparing opinions.
4. 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.
5. Keeps abreast of changes in the law to aid the Court in adjusting to new legislation and case law development in the pro se area.
6. Provides information, guidance and advice to District Judges, Magistrate Judges and other personnel working in the pro se area. Advises appropriate personnel on the status of particular cases.
7. Performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

To qualify for the position, 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 of the following accomplishments or proficiencies.

- Standing within the upper third of the law school class from a law school on the approved list of either the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools;
- Experience on the editorial board of a law review of such a school;
- Graduation from such a school with an LLM degree; or
- Proficiency in legal studies that, in the opinion of the appointment judge, is the equivalent of one of the above. Some examples of criteria that are considered to be acceptable as equivalent include:
 - ▶ Publication of a noteworthy article in a law school student publication or other scholarly publication;
 - ▶ Special high-level honors for academic excellence in law school, such as election to the Order of the Coif;
 - ▶ Winning of a moot court competition or membership on a moot court team that represents the law school in competition with other law schools;
 - ▶ Participation in the legal aid or other law school clinical program sanctioned by the law school;* or
 - ▶ Summer experience as a law clerk to a state or local judge or law clerk experience on a continuing basis in a private firm while attending school, i.e., working one's way through college.* (*To receive credit, participation and experience could not have been for academic credit).

This list is not all-inclusive; the determination of an acceptable equivalence rests with the appointing judge.

Legal Work Experience:

Legal work experience is progressively responsible experience in the practice of law, in legal research, legal administration, or equivalent experience received after graduation from law school. Major or substantial legal activities while in military service may be credited, on a month-for-month basis whether before or after graduation, but not to exceed one year if before graduation.

The table below shows the number of years of legal work experience required to qualify for appointment as a pro se law clerk at the applicable JSP grade level. Please note that appointment to a JSP-12 or above requires that the candidate be a member of the bar of a state, territory, or federal court of general jurisdiction.

JSP Grade Level	Years of legal work experience	Bar Membership Required
11	0	No
12	1	Yes
13	2	Yes
14	3	Yes

Background Investigation & The Fair Chance to Compete Act (FCA):

This position is **not** covered under the FCA. Due to the sensitivity level of this position, candidates may be asked about their criminal history prior to receiving a tentative offer of employment. Candidates completing the AO-78 must complete questions 18-20 regarding their criminal history. Criminal history is not in itself disqualifying. All available information, past and present, favorable and unfavorable, about the reliability and trustworthiness of an individual will be considered when making an employment suitability determination. Providing false and/or misleading information may be grounds for removal from the application and selection process, as well as disciplinary action if discovered after an individual's date of hire.

Additional Information:

Applicants must be U.S. citizens or eligible to work in the United States. Employees are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees, which is available to applicants upon request. Employees of the United States District Court are Excepted Service Appointments. Excepted Appointments are "at will" and can be terminated with or without cause by the Court. The individual selected for this position must sign up for a direct deposit for payment of salary.

The Court provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodation, please notify human resources. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Benefits:

Employees of the United States District Court are not included in the Government's Civil Service classification. They are, however, entitled to the same benefits as other federal government employees. These benefits include: participation in a federal health insurance program; participation in federal dental and vision plans; participation in a group life insurance program; participation in long-term care insurance program; participation in a flexible spending account; participation in retirement benefits; minimum of eleven (11) paid holidays per year; accrued vacation and sick leave; student loan forgiveness; telework; paid parking and on-site fitness center.

Application Process and Deadline:

Consideration will only be given to those that apply through the court's online applicant tracking system. To view openings and to apply, visit our applicant tracking system at:

<https://forms.nynd.uscourts.gov/recruitment/>.

Individuals interested are asked to submit:

- (1) Letter of interest.
- (2) Current resume.
- (3) Writing sample (no more than 10 pages).
- (4) Unofficial law school transcript.
- (5) List of three professional references, and
- (6) Completed AO-78, Application for Judicial Branch Federal Employment (submitted via applicant system).

*Participation in the interview process will be at the applicant's own expense. The Court will not pay relocation expenses. **Only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.***

The United States District Court, Northern District of New York reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement; to withdraw the job announcement; or to fill the position earlier than the closing date. Any of which may occur without prior written notice.

This Court is an Equal Opportunity Employer.